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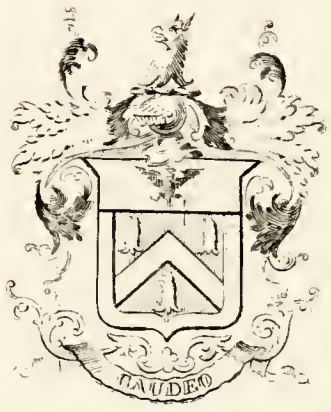

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AN

ESSAY

ON

MORAL AGENCY.

AN

ESSAY

ON

MORAL AGENCY:

CONTAINING

Remarks on a late anonymous Publication,

ENTITLED,

An EXAMINATION of the late PRESIDENT EDWARDS's INQUIRY on FREEDOM of WILL.

BY STEPHEN WEST, D. D.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN STOCKBRIDGE.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.
PSALM CX. 3.

THE SECOND EDITION.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN

APPENDIX,

BY THE AUTHOR.

SALEM:
PRINTED BY THOMAS C. CUSHING.
1794.

PREFACE.

THE doctrines of divine prescience, and of the liberty and freedom of the creature, have been thought, by many, to be involved in so much darkness and uncertainty, especially when considered in their mutual relation to each other, and the aspect which the one necessarily hath upon the other; that it hath been esteemed a mark of modesty, good sense, and ingenuity, frankly to confess our ignorance in points of such depth and mystery, and yield them up as perfectly incapable of being reconciled, even in idea, the one with the other. With this view and apprehension of things are the minds of some so entirely and perfectly possessed, that the very thought of its being in the power of man to reconcile the *foreknowledge* of God, with the *liberty of will* in creatures, is strongly repelled; and the knowledge of any attempt to shew the consistency of the one with the other, received with sensible uneasiness and displeasure. And yet these are, both, points of undoubted certainty and truth; and that, by the acknowledgment of most of those in whose apprehensions they are so exceedingly mysterious, irreconcilable and incomprehensible. This (if I may be permitted to say it) to me appeareth remarkable. That we should firmly believe doctrines which *in our own view* are perfectly incapable, by any human understanding, of being reconciled together, is like yielding our assent to both parts of a contradiction. And, not only so, but that we should esteem them both of such importance as to make them articles of our

religious

religious faith and belief, and yet be ſo effectually perſuaded of their inconſiſtency with each other, as to look upon every attempt to reconcile the *liberty* and *freedom* of men in their actions, with that indiſſoluble, infallible connexion of all events with ſome antecedent cauſe, reaſon or ground of their exiſtence, which is neceſſarily implied in the doctrine of the full and perfect *preſcience* of God; to me, I confeſs, appeareth rather an argument of the power of prejudice, and of an unreaſonable attachment to ſome pre-conceived opinion, than of real modeſty and true greatneſs of mind. However, the beſt of men are, doubtleſs, liable to prejudice and miſtake, and incident to error: and very far would I be from cenſuring thoſe who differ from me in opinion, reſpecting the points principally treated on, in the following Eſſay, as either diſhoneſt or weak. What I would by theſe obſervations, is to make it appear that the conſiſtency of *human liberty* with the *preſcience* of God, is a ſubject *fit and proper* to engage the attention of men; and that to evince this conſiſtency cannot be unworthy of the *attempt* of ſuch as profeſs themſelves advocates for both, and to have a firm perſuaſion of the truth and importance of them, whatever appearance there may be of inconſiſtency between them. By *this means* and *in this way* would I beſpeak the candour and engage the patience of the reader: hoping that theſe obſervations may raiſe and awaken his attention, to what I have written on the ſubject.

From ſuch whoſe minds are ſoured and prejudiced againſt every thing that is *new*, and who, even themſelves, will be *bitter* againſt the bitterneſs of diſpute, I have little favour to expect: with them I look for little ſucceſs. No arguments will adminiſter conviction to them. Nothing can be clear—nothing perſpicuous enough to enlighten, convince and perſuade them. Such as are reſolved to embrace the reigning ſentiments and the faſhionable opinions; or who take

their

their principles *upon truſt*, without examining for themſelves and ſeeing with their own eyes; will probably receive little or no improvement from the following Eſſay, even though the deſign of it ſhould be judiciouſly executed. *Theſe* (if any ſuch there are) are the adverſaries from whom I am moſt apprehenſive of danger. *Theſe* commonly make uſe of weapons, againſt which there is no defence.

But if there are any who are impartial lovers of truth; who are diſpoſed to careful and critical examination; who are ready to admit *any* point upon proper evidence, even though it be *new*, and oppoſed by the ſtrong current of prevailing opinion; to them I beg leave humbly to commend the peruſal of the following Eſſay: to *their* judgment and correction I cheerfully ſubmit it: from *them* I hope for inſtruction and improvement, and by *them* I hope to be ſet right in points wherein it ſhall appear that I am wrong. Nor am I without hopes of affording ſome pleaſure, entertainment and improvement to them.

To what I have written upon that moſt important ſubject of *the divine agency reſpecting the event of moral evil*, I earneſtly and *particularly* requeſt the careful, critical and candid attention of the reader. Here I have purſued ſomewhat of an unbeaten path; and not without great fears and apprehenſions leſt I ſhould ſay ſomething diſhonourable and reproachful to HIM, the honour of whoſe glorious government and name I have humbly endeavoured to vindicate and defend. Here, in many things I have ſaid, I pretend not to be *poſitive*—to be *certain*: and any air of peremptorineſs which my arguments may be thought to carry in them, I humbly requeſt may be conſidered as intended and meant to give the argument its greateſt advantage, and not to expreſs the *confidence* I have in my own ſentiments and opinion. I have written nothing, however, but what appeared to me to be the truth.

Objections

Objections I have endeavoured ſhould appear to advantage, and in their full ſtrength: and whether I am to be accuſed of giving *weak* anſwers to *ſtrong* objections, the intelligent reader muſt judge. After all, if the ſcheme of doctrine and ſentiments here advanced, ſhall be found, upon careful, ſtrict examination, to imply any thing inconſiſtent with the moſt perfect purity and holineſs of God, and his utter and infinite hatred of all moral evil; or any thing inconſiſtent with the ideas of deſert of puniſhment in the ſinner; I will cheerfully give it up, and heartily condemn and abjure it: and ſhall think myſelf obliged to make my moſt grateful acknowledgments to any one, who ſhall be at the pains of detecting the weakneſs and ſophiſtry of thoſe arguments by which I have urged a ſpecial divine agency and diſpoſal, giving certainty to the exiſtence of *moral evil* in the ſyſtem. Yet I cannot but expreſs my hopes that the reaſons and arguments which I herewith humbly offer to the public, in ſupport of the doctrine I have preſumed to advance, will be a means of diffuſing ſome new light on this important ſubject; and will invite ſome one of a more nice diſcernment and juſt and comprehenſive view of things, more carefully to examine and thoroughly to ſcan and canvaſs the ſubject.

A vindication of Mr. Edwards, the reader will eaſily diſcern, hath not been an object ſo *particularly* in view in the following Eſſay. *His* character is but of ſmall importance, compared to that of the cauſe of truth: but if it was, it appeareth not to need any ſupport which *the author of the following ſheets* is capable of giving it. For although it may be true that the author of the *Examination of his Inquiry*, &c. hath detected ſome leſſer errors in that very maſterly tract; yet the grand pillars of his doctrine, I am humbly of opinion, ſtill ſtand firm and unſhaken; and that juſtly celebrated performance remaineth as a brazen wall againſt the prevailing errors of the day. This great man's

man's writings, though doubtleſs in many reſpects *imperfect*, have yet left a ſavour in his name, which will make it remembered with gratitude and pleaſure by the lovers of truth, and friends of free inquiry.

That ſo important a ſubject as that of *Liberty* and *Agency* (a ſubject which hath engaged the attention and employed the pens of the greateſt *Geniuſes* in the ſeveral learned nations, in almoſt all ages of the world) ſhould be undertaken by ſo young and inexperienced a writer, may be thought by many, perhaps, arrogant and preſumptuous. This, however, it is hoped, will not prejudice the reader againſt the *arguments*—*the reaſons* which are exhibited in ſupport of the leading ſentiments of the following *Eſſay*, and the ſcheme of doctrine contained in it. The *ſtyle* and *manner* are, doubtleſs, in many reſpects very defective, and need the candour and patience of the reader; which, accordingly, are humbly requeſted. But to aſk any favour to the *argument*, would be doing injuſtice to the cauſe of truth.

Many things in the *Examiner*, which appeared to me to be exceptionable, have been paſſed unnoticed; they not falling ſo directly within the deſign of the following *Eſſay*. But the arguments which appeared, to me, to be of principal weight in ſupport of that *freedom of will* for which he profeſſeth himſelf an advocate, I have, according to my ability, examined and conſidered. I have not deſignedly miſunderſtood or perverted his meaning, nor knowingly wreſted his words from their moſt plain and obvious import, by forced and unnatural conſtruction. But whether I have, in any thing, *corrected* him, and ſhown his reaſonings to be inconcluſive and unjuſt, I muſt leave to the judgment of the candid and intelligent reader.

I have only to requeſt a patient, fair and impartial hearing; and humbly to aſk the united prayers of all

the lovers and friends of truth, to the great fountain and *Father of lights*, for larger and more abundant meaſures to be given of that bleſſed *Spirit* which leadeth and guideth into all truth; that all error, ignorance and darkneſs may be done away, and light and truth prevail and ſhine more abundantly, to the *Glory of God*, here in our dark world.

Stockbridge,
27th March, 1772.

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

INQUIRIES of this nature, which can be uſeful to mankind only as they ſerve to illuſtrate the nature of that moral agency which is eſſential to virtue and vice, as far as I have had opportunity to obſerve, have generally been expreſſly upon the point of liberty: a term, in ſome reſpects, of more doubtful and various ſignification than that agency itſelf, in order to a right underſtanding and juſt explanation of which, *Liberty* hath been the ſubject of inquiry and altercation.

Moral Agency is what every one acknowledgeth to be eſſential to virtue and vice, reward or puniſhment. But *liberty*, in the ſenſe in which the term is many times uſed, is not eſſential to either; but may or may not be poſſeſſed, and yet the ſubject in queſtion have proper deſert of puniſhment, or reward.

Liberty, as the term is uſed in common language, undoubtely meaneth *a power of doing as we pleaſe*. This, I believe, is its moſt common and natural ſignification. But a little attention will convince any one that this definition of liberty doth not contain the moſt eſſential and important ideas of that agency and freedom which neceſſarily imply, in them, deſert of praiſe or blame, reward or puniſhment. *A power to do as we pleaſe*, implieth a diſtinction between the *pleaſure* of the will, and the *doing or action* of the perſon: or, at leaſt, plainly admits it. This definition, therefore,

of liberty, placeth it in ſomething entirely diſtinct from the *pleaſure of the mind*—the exerciſes of the *will*: though it is very manifeſt that the pleaſure of the mind itſelf, which is the ſource of our actions, and is the fountain from whence they proceed, is morally beautiful or deformed, and hath in it proper deſert of praiſe or blame. According to this definition of it, therefore, *liberty* is not an eſſential ingredient of that agency and exertion of which we may properly predicate virtue, or vice. There may be ſuch exerciſes and exertions, as, in the common eſtimation of men, carry in them deſert of praiſe or blame; and yet the ſubject of theſe exerciſes be utterly deſtitute of that liberty which conſiſteth in a power of *doing as we pleaſe*. The heart, the affection, may be right—the whole of the *internal exerciſe* may be virtuous and commendable, and ſuch as every one muſt judge to be worthy of reſpect and eſteem; while the perſon is entirely reſtrained from *any outward action*; being bound down by fetters and cords. In this caſe it is apparent, as Paul ſays, 2. Cor. viii. 12. that *If there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*. So, on the other hand, there is nothing irrational or incongruous, in ſuppoſing that men may be guilty of great and abominable wickedneſs, while they are forcibly reſtrained from any outward exceſs: their *internal exerciſes* being ſuch (could they be known to mankind) as would be univerſally cenſured and condemned. In ſuch a caſe as this it is very manifeſtly true, according to the obſervation of the wiſe man, that *As a man thinketh in his heart, ſo is he*. Prov. xxiii. 7.

It is unneceſſary, therefore, in an inquiry into the nature of that moral agency which is eſſential to virtue and vice, reward and puniſhment, preciſely to aſcertain the nature and bounds of *Liberty*, in the various ſenſes in which the term is uſed among mankind; or expreſſly and particularly to define it. It is enough

if

if we can gain a clear, full view of that agency of mankind which hath in it proper deſert of praiſe, or blame, and which is neceſſarily either virtuous or vicious; for in ſuch an agency as this is comprehended all that liberty which dignifieth human nature, and diſtinguiſheth moral beings—accountable agents.

And if we can diſcover particularly and preciſely what that is, which is moſt directly obedience or diſobedience to the will and commands of God;—what it is that *He* looketh upon with eſteem and approbation, or with abhorrence and deteſtation;—what is truly morally beautiful, or really and abſolutely deformed; the queſtion concerning *Liberty*, as far as it reſpects ethicks or morality, will be ſufficiently decided.

Whatever be the true idea or definition of *Liberty*, as applied to morals; we may reſt ſatisfied that the juſt and good God will never either reward or puniſh any of his creatures, for any of their actions which were not *free* to all intents and purpoſes, with that kind of freedom, which, in his view, is eſſential to the nature of virtue and vice. We may, likewiſe, confide in it, that nothing will be eſteemed, by mankind in general, either morally beautiful, or deformed—meriting either commendation, or cenſure; which hath not all that liberty and freedom in it and predicable of it, which, in the common eſtimation of men, is eſſential to moral action—to our being accountable creatures, and proper ſubjects of, either puniſhment, or reward.

If I ſhould be ſo happy as properly to define moral agency, and illuſtrate the nature and aſcertain the idea of it, in the following Eſſay:—if I ſhould ſay any thing which may reflect any new light upon this important ſubject; or open a track which may be purſued to advantage by ſome abler genius, to a farther diſcovery of truth and a fuller illuſtration of the im-

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portant ſubject before us; I ſhall think myſelf amply rewarded: and conceive that I do a greater ſervice to mankind, and to the cauſe of truth in general, than if I ſhould particularly and accurately define the term *Liberty*, in its ſeveral and various ſignifications: although when uſed in *a moral ſenſe*, I mean not to leave it undefined.

How I ſucceed in an undertaking which, it ſeems, hath not hitherto been executed to the entire ſatisfaction of mankind (notwithſtanding the ability and judgment with which the ſubject has been treated) the impartial public muſt judge. I have only to crave their attention, and candid conſtruction of what I may offer upon the ſubject.

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PART II.

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PART I.

SECTION I.

MORAL AGENCY *defined, and ſhewn to conſiſt in the Exerciſes of the Will.*

MORAL AGENCY (without any metaphyſical ſubtilty or refinement) conſiſteth in *Spontaneous, Voluntary Exertion.* Whenever we do any thing voluntarily, and of free choice, we perform a moral action—an action meriting cenſure or commendation. He who acteth electively, or putteth forth an act of will, is herein a moral agent, and a proper ſubject of reward or puniſhment, praiſe or blame. All the exerciſes of our wills, our hearts and affections, are of a moral nature. This is the agency which rendereth us accountable creatures; theſe are the actions for which we are rewardable or puniſhable in the ſight of God.

That *ſpontaneous, voluntary exertion* is ſuch an agency as hath moral deſert in it, and is that whereof it is proper and fitting that we ſhould give an account, ſeems to be a dictate of natural reaſon, and the common ſenſe of men; and is what muſt be on all hands allowed. Even they who plead for a power of *ſelf-determination* in men, and who urge that acts of the will are *ſelf-originated*, or that they ſpring from their own internal energy and activity; yet concede, that theſe *acts of the will*, theſe *voluntary exertions*, have moral deſert in them, and really render us fit ſubjects of puniſhment, or reward. And it muſt ne-

ceſſarily be ſo: for from whatever *cauſe* the acts of the will are ſuppoſed to ariſe; let it be either *internal* or *external;* let it be from ſomething peculiar to the *nature* of volition, or from ſome foreign, extrinſic cauſe; it is unreaſonable to look into the *cauſe*, for *that agency itſelf* which is directly and immediately the object of diſeſteem or approbation. If there *is* a power in men to *originate* volition, or to *produce* voluntary exertion; this power itſelf, whenever it is exerciſed, is *voluntary:* and in this ſpontaneous, free, *voluntary*, exertion of this ſuppoſed power, the advocates for it place that liberty and agency which are ſuppoſed to be eſſential to virtue and vice. If the exertion of this ſuppoſed power is *not voluntary*, it is of courſe *involuntary*,* or *neceſſary* with a natural neceſſity; and therefore cannot, conſiſtently with common reaſon and ſenſe, be taken for *moral agency*, or ſuch an effect, operation or exertion, as is capable of being conſidered, with the leaſt propriety, as the object of praiſe or blame.

That moral agency cannot conſiſt in any ſuch power as may be conceived to exiſt previouſly to its being put forth into action, and exerted for the production of volition, is evident from this ſingle conſideration, viz. That, by the ſuppoſition, there is no *agency* or *action* in it.

When we talk of moral agency, we talk of ſome kind of *action* or *exertion;* and not merely of ſomething which may be a *foundation* for action, and is yet perfectly and entirely diſtinct from it. When we ſpeak of a perſon, or moral being, as the ſubject of puniſhment or reward, or as having in him deſert of praiſe or blame, it is agreeable to the common ſenſe and underſtanding of men, to conſider him *as in exerciſe*—at leaſt *as having put forth* ſome motion or exertion. It is not common for men either to commend or blame any thing which is merely paſſive and without any exerciſe or exertion. It is certainly agreeable to reaſon to

* The word *involuntary* I here uſe, not as denoting any *oppoſition made to the will*, as the term moſt generally implieth; but merely as being *without will*, and *without deſign*.

to look for ſome real conformity, in a moral agent, to ſome rule or law which is obligatory on him, or ſome *poſitive oppoſition* to it as a proper ground of praiſe or blame, cenſure or commendation.* Where there is no exerciſe of will—no affection of mind, there is nothing, in a moral ſenſe, either beautiful or deformed.

Whatever, therefore, may be the powers of mankind in reſpect to the *production* of volition; whatever be the *cauſe* out of which voluntary exertion ariſeth; whether it be internal or external; whether ſuch exertion is *ſelf-originated*, or ariſeth as an effect out of ſome foreign cauſe; ſtill where ſuch an effect is formed, there is moral agency; and where it is not, there it is in vain to look for moral quality—either virtue or vice.

In *ſpontaneous, voluntary exertion* is all the freedom which it is poſſible for any one to enjoy. Here is all

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* Againſt this propoſition it may poſſibly be objected, that "*Want* of conformity" to the divine law, is ſinful—*Want of love*, or *not loving* God, is criminal; and therefore, (it may be urged) it is unreaſonable to place that moral agency which rendereth us capable of virtue and vice, and makes us the fit ſubjects of reward or puniſhment, altogether in *ſpontaneous, voluntary exertion*. Such an objector I would aſk, In whom is "*a want of conformity*," or *want of love*, ſinful?—In trees, or in brutes? This will not be pretended. That want of love to God which is to be found in the brutal creation, or in the vegetable world, cannot be criminal. Why then ſhould want of love to God be criminal in man—unleſs it be, that in all *that want of love* toward God or our fellow-creatures, for which we are chargeable with wickedneſs in the eye of the divine law, there is ſome *poſitive oppoſition* to love—ſome *affection of mind* inconſiſtent with love? It is true, that when we exerciſe our affection, it ought to be, not in oppoſition, but in poſitive love, to God. To exerciſe any affection reſpecting the Deity which is wholly without love, is infinitely wrong and criminal. In ſuch a ſenſe as this, it is morally evil *not to love God*. But that which is *merely negative*, hath no quality in it—nothing predicable of it. Where there is no affection inconſiſtent with love—no exerciſe of heart carrying in it any oppoſition to God, or reflection upon him unworthy of his own infinitely excellent and glorious character, there is nothing criminal or offenſive to Cod. That *want of love* which is criminal, is ſomething which hath *undutifulneſs* in it towards God: it invariably implieth ſome mental exerciſe or affection which is inconſiſtent with love, and which containeth in it *diſreſpect* to God, and poureth contempt upon him. It is not agreeable to the practice and common ſenſe of men, to cenſure and condemn anything which is *negative*, in any other ſenſe than this. If we feel ourſelves in great diſtreſs, or in imminent danger, and one of our fellow-men ſhould ſtand by and refuſe to lend us his aſſiſtance, we ſhould have juſt reaſon to caſt blame and cenſure upon him: but if he was fallen into a ſwoon, or buried in a deep ſleep, we ſhould entertain no hard thoughts of him. The reaſon is plain: his *not aſſiſting us*, in the former caſe, containeth in it a *criminal indifference* to our ſafety—*ſome exerciſe of heart* inconſiſtent with a proper concern for it; in the latter, it doth not. For this reaſon we juſtly blame in the one caſe, and not in the other. So *that want of love* to God which *only* is criminal, is a want of love which containeth in it ſome poſitive oppoſition or diſaffection to God, or ſuch indifferency of mind toward him, as is inconſiſtent with love.

the moral liberty which is any ways eſſential to reward or puniſhment, virtue or vice. Whoever acteth voluntarily, acteth in the view of motives: and in the volitions of agents which take place and are exerted in the veiw of motives, is all the influence which motives have, on intelligent minds. He who exerteth volitions, and exerciſeth affections, in the view of motives, acteth like a rational, intelligent, moral agent. He inherits all that moral liberty which it is poſſible for a creature to enjoy; and all, which any creature doth or can improve.

Liberty and *agency*, as it appears to me they have often been made uſe of in diſputes, are terms of ſuch refinement and abſtraction as to be incapable of any very clear explanation. While theſe terms lead us to an inquiry after any thing different from what we all have conſciouſneſs of, whenever we exerciſe our wills and affections, we are purſuing a ſhadow inſtead of a ſubſtance; there being no *liberty*, *freedom*, *agency*, or *power of will*, beſide what is exerciſed in voluntary, ſpontaneous exertion, which any one can ſenſibly feel and enjoy—which can be of any benefit to any one, or capable of improvement. When we look for that liberty or freedom which dignifieth human nature above the lower creation, we are to ſearch for it only in what every man feels when he exerciſeth will and affection, or, in the view of motives, puts forth or exerteth an act of choice. This is what makes a free agent: theſe are the exerciſes and powers which conſtitute human liberty—moral freedom.

Moral liberty eſſentially conſiſteth in voluntary exerciſe. And yet when I ſay that liberty *conſiſteth* in voluntary exerciſe, I would not be underſtood, that *liberty* and *volition* are convertible terms, importing preciſely one and the ſame thing. But my meaning is, that in every volition we find liberty, true moral liberty, and the higheſt kind of it that ever can be found in a moral agent. Motion, and a body moving, are not preciſely one and the ſame thing: yet we can have no

idea

idea of the former, without the latter. So although liberty and volition may not be precisely the same, yet all the idea we have of liberty is to be found in voluntary exertion. Volition may more properly be termed a *free action*, than *freedom*: yet to obtain an idea of liberty, our best way, as in many other cases, is not to consider things abstractly, but to turn our thoughts to the concrete (volition); wherein we shall certainly discover the thing sought for, though it is so difficult, if not impossible, to separate the abstract from the concrete. To be *free*, therefore, and to be *voluntary* in any action whatsoever, either internal or external, I suppose are one and the same thing.

It therefore appears that the question so often agitated, viz. Whether the *Will* is free? is utterly unmeaning and impertinent. Whatever is inconsistent with the freedom of the human will, is equally inconsistent with the very being of it: for taking away its freedom, is destroying its very essence. There is no more propriety in asking whether the *Will* is *free?* than whether *the essential properties* of a subject belong to it? or whether any thing is made up of its constituent parts? It may as well be asked, whether *fire is hot*, or *water fluid?* as whether the *Will* is *free?* and yet every one knows that heat and fluidity are essential properties of fire and water; the ideas of these qualities being necessarily contained in the explanation of the terms. In like manner is freedom essential to the human will; and liberty as essential a property of our voluntary exertions, as heat is of fire, or fluidity of water.

Here is the only liberty, agency or freedom, of which it is possible that mankind should be conscious and percipient. We may with as much reason suppose that mankind are *conscious* and *percipient* of that which is the *ground* of their *first* perception and consciousness; as to suppose that they are conscious of any moral liberty, or power of will, antecedent to, and the ground of, voluntary exertion. The mind is conscious of nothing otherwise than in and by its own exertions.

ertions. As it is conſcious of a power of thought and idea, only in thinking and perceiving; ſo it is conſcious of a *power of will*, only in *the exerciſes of volition*. That the mind ſhould be conſcious of a *power of choice* which is diſtinguiſhable from *actual chooſing*, is no more conceivable, than that we ſhould be conſcious of a power of thinking and perceiving, without, at the ſame time, *feeling* or *exerciſing any perception or thought*.

Minds are converſant only with their own ideas: they perceive and are immediately conſcious of nothing beſide their own exerciſes and ideas. However the mind may *reaſon* and *infer* concerning other things, and form premiſes, and make concluſions, with a great degree of juſtice and preciſion; ſtill thoſe things of which we attain the knowledge in ſuch a way as this, are not the objects of direct, immediate perception. If liberty is what we perceive actually to exiſt in the mind, it can certainly be perceived no otherwiſe than in its exerciſe: juſt as a power of choice can be perceived only in actual chooſing. But liberty *exerciſed* muſt certainly be a *voluntary* exerciſe—an exerciſe of will. And what liberty or freedom any one can perceive *to be in voluntary exerciſe*, beſide what is itſelf an exertion of will, and is neceſſarily included in all our *voluntary exertions*, is to me quite inconceivable. It therefore followeth, that there is in mankind no conſciouſneſs of liberty or freedom, beſide the conſciouſneſs neceſſarily contained in our voluntary exertions. Conſequently it is prepoſterous and unintelligible, to talk of being *conſcious* of any power of will, diſtinct from the *exerciſe* of will; or, of a power of chooſing, diſtinct from actual choice. *Exerciſes* of volition, and *making actual choice*, are ſomething of which we all have a conſciouſneſs in innumerable inſtances: and herein is all the *power of will*, the *power of choice*, of which we have any direct and immediate perception.

If mankind have any conſciouſneſs or immediate perception of any power of will, diſtinct from what they

they feel in the actual exercises of volition—if they are conscious of any power of action, distinct from the consciousness they have in actual voluntary exertion, and previous to it; they must nevertheless be conscious of this power as *being in exercise*. If they are conscious of this power of will and action *as in actual exercise*; this is in no measure different from being conscious of *actual choice—voluntary exertion*. To be conscious of *a power of will in actual exercise*, is just the same as to be conscious of an exercise of will—actual volition. This I think is obvious.

If they are conscious of a power of will which is antecedent to exercise, and the ground of it, it must be a power wherein men are *involuntary* and *passive*; it being a power resulting from the immediate efficiency of God as its cause; and therefore can, with no propriety, on any principles, be termed *free*. It is objected against the doctrine of an infallible connection in things, that it is inconsistent with the freedom and liberty of the will, to admit, that the exercises of it arise from any extrinsic influence and cause. But no one, I apprehend, will think of asserting, that this *power of will* in men, which is insisted on by some as the next and immediate cause of *voluntary* exercise, doth not arise wholly and entirely from some *extrinsic* influence and cause. Agreeable to the opinions of those, therefore, who make this objection, it is impossible that liberty or freedom should consist in such a power. For in this power, by the supposition, mankind are *in every sense* passive. It was made—created by the Deity, without any agency, influence or choice of their's: and now it is made, it is perfectly involuntary and passive. It is therefore impossible, that *liberty* or *freedom* should consist in any such power as is previous to *voluntary exercise—mental exertion*.

I the rather mention these things to take off the force of the arguments in favor of some power of action in men, distinct from voluntary exertion, which can with any shew of reason be considered as our dignity or privilege,

vilege, pretended to be drawn from the feelings of human nature, and the univerſal ſenſe and experience of mankind. And if the obſervations which have been mentioned are juſt, there are, in fact, no ſuch feelings as are urged, in human nature; nor is it the univerſal ſenſe of mankind, that human nature is dignified with any ſuch powers; or that it doth inherit or poſſeſs them.

Spontaneous, voluntary exertion is ſomething of which all mankind have immediate conſciouſneſs and perception. Here is an agency, the exiſtence and reality of which may be ſupported and proved by all the feelings of human nature, and the univerſally concurring teſtimony of all mankind. Here is all the power which is neceſſary to render any one a moral agent, an accountable creature, and the proper ſubject of reward or puniſhment, praiſe or blame.

But it will probably be expected, that ſome reaſons ſhould be offered in juſtification of the definition which hath been given of *moral agency*; and, to ſhew that no power in *men*, previous to voluntary exertion, and the ground thereof, is any ways eſſential to the morality of actions; or to that agency which is neceſſary to reward or puniſhment, virtue or vice. The following reaſons appear to me ſufficient to juſtify the definition.

I. That men are the proper ſubjects of reward and puniſhment, for all their voluntary, ſpontaneous exertions. Whatever of deſert there may be in other things, it is yet conceded on all hands, that our *voluntary* exertions have moral deſert in them. This is a ſort of agency which is the object of command and prohibition in the word of God. Accordingly we find that the exerciſes of affection, voluntary exertions, are ſubjected to law, and are the direct object of divine precept. "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God," &c. is the firſt and great commandment. Nor can any thing juſtly be conſidered as having the nature of obedience or diſobedience, any farther than it partaketh of *voluntary exerciſe and affection*. Mere voluntary exerciſes, of a certain

certain kind, are accepted as obedience. Theſe, and theſe only, are our conformity to the divine law. And ſo much do all obedience and diſobedience conſiſt in the exerciſes of the will, ſo much do our voluntary exertions conſtitute the very eſſence and formal nature of virtue and vice, that no man will ever be, either rewarded or puniſhed, for any thing beſide his exerciſes of affection—ſpontaneous, voluntary exertions. Whatever action or event taketh place without any concurrence of our wills, or otherwiſe than as the fruit of our voluntary exertion, and which hath nothing of our will or choice in it, will never be ſet to our account for adjuſting our reward or puniſhment.

It is agreeable to the common ſenſe and opinions of men, that all ſpontaneous, voluntary exertions carry in them deſert of either puniſhment or reward. It is a maxim eſtabliſhed by the univerſal ſenſe of mankind, that the exerciſes of our affections are, in their very nature, either virtuous or vicious.* And ſo univerſally doth a ſenſe of deſert on this account prevail among mankind, that in order to determine any man's character and deſert, we always accuſtom ourſelves to inquire into *his motives*, and the *temper*, *diſpoſition* or *ſtate* of mind from whence his outward actions and conduct proceed. Here, all acknowledge, are to be found moral quality and deſert. In the *exerciſes of affection* do men place virtue, or vice.

Theſe obſervations are abundantly confirmed by the Author of the *Examination of the late Preſident Edwards's Inquiry on Freedom of Will.* He conſidereth *all moral good and evil* as *conſiſting in the diſpoſition or eſtate of the mind or will.* (p. 31.) He ſays (p. 96) that *we approve good intentions*, and *condemn evil ones*, *in ourſelves (and in others, ſo far as ſuch affections can be known.)* And in the ſame place he repreſents it,

 that

* Dr. Taylor, in his Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, greatly inſiſteth that all ſin lieth in *the choice* of the mind. Thus he tells us (p. 127. edit. 2.) that the original cauſe "of ſin is a man's *chooſing* to follow the appetites of the fleſh;" that "ſin proceedeth from our own *choice*, as it *neceſſarily* muſt;" (p. 130) that "vice is *always the faulty choice of a perſon's own will, otherwiſe it is not choice.*" (p. 190.) And he repreſenteth *luſt*, or *irregular deſire*, as being *itſelf* ſinful. (p. 213.)

that whatever the outward actions of men *in fact* are, they are judged according to what they *would* have done. He saith, further, that *though natural neceſſity exerciſeth the outward act, it hinders not but the eſtate of the will may be right or wrong.* The juſtneſs of theſe obſervations depends entirely upon the ſuppoſition that virtue and vice are properly and directly predicable of the exerciſes of affection—free, ſpontaneous, voluntary exertions. If, in the exerciſes of ſuch affections ſimply, there is nothing virtuous or vicious, commendable or criminal; then ſurely we are to look farther back than to the *intentions* of men, or the *ſtate of their wills*, for virtue and vice.

II. There is nothing morally beautiful or deformed in any thing beſide the exerciſes of affection—ſpontaneous, voluntary exertion. Where there is no affection of any kind, there is nothing which beareth any reſemblance of the moral character of the Deity; nor, any thing oppoſite to it. Where there are no exerciſes of affection, it is impoſſible that there ſhould be any degree of obedience to that great command of LOVE, wherein is the fulfilling of the law: and, I may add, where there is no affection, as little is there of oppoſition to it. If the great and only moral beauty in the univerſe conſiſteth in *love*, in its ſeveral and different exerciſes and modifications (all which conſiſt in certain poſitive exerciſes of affection) it is in vain to look for *moral beauty*, where there is an entire want and negation of all mental, voluntary affection: and our expectations of finding any moral turpitude or deformity, will be as utterly fruitleſs, if we ſearch for it in ſomething which is wholly deſtitute of all mental exerciſe and affection. We may as well look for moral beauty in the order, proportion and harmony of the natural ſyſtem, or in the colours of the rainbow, as in any thing whatſoever, which is wholly void of mental exerciſe and affection. And we may as rationally predicate moral turpitude and deformity of barren deſerts and ragged mountains, as of any thing

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which is utterly deſtitute of all voluntary affection and exertion. There is nothing, either in any beauty, or deformity, which can be found in *any thing* that is wholly without mental exerciſe and affection, that is any way diſtinguiſhable from the beauty and deformity of *natural things*; which none pretend to be either virtuous or vicious. And if it is indeed ſo that there is no moral beauty or deformity in any thing beſide the exerciſes of affection—free, voluntary exertion; in ſuch exertion, doubtleſs, is to be found that agency which diſtinguiſheth moral beings, and is the proper ground of our accountableneſs to God.

III. The remorſe of conſcience which wicked men feel, is upon no other ground than that of the ſuppoſed evil and turpitude of exerciſes of affection—voluntary, ſpontaneous exertion: This, therefore, is an argument that *moral agency* conſiſteth in ſuch affections and exertions. When we do any outward action for which we condemn ourſelves, our remorſe always terminates upon the affection from whence it proceeded, and which was the cauſe of it:—All the ground of ſorrow is, that we *exerciſed* and *indulged* ſuch affections and inclinations. We feel ourſelves juſtly condemned for any wicked action, upon the conſideration that *our hearts were in the thing*, and we did it *voluntarily and freely*. No one pretends to look any farther back than to the *voluntary deſign and intention*, for a ground of praiſe or blame. An awakened conſcience never referreth us farther back than to the *affection—the intention* of the mind. And if *bad deſign and intention* can be faſtened upon us, all our pleas fail, and our excuſes vaniſh, and our own conſciences condemn us.

In theſe obſervations I have the Ex—r's concurrence, in the following words. He ſaith, (p. 97) *We are condemned or approved of ourſelves for a willing or unwilling mind; and have a natural apprehenſion that the judgment of God will ſecond our own*—A natural apprehenſion, however, which, I muſt obſerve, is very ill founded, unleſs there is ſomething worthy of being

approved or condemned in the *exercises of the will*, or in *voluntary exertions*. Our Author, I am sensible, presently adds, that "the inward perturbation vicious "men feel, proceeds from a conviction that they might "have *cultivated another frame of heart*." But if by "*cultivating another frame of heart*," he intends any thing distinct from voluntary exertion—any thing *without volition* and without design; the assertion is as irreconcilable with his own previous observation, as with the argument now under consideration. If by *cultivating another frame of heart* our Author intends to denote any *exercise of mind or heart*, it must unquestionably be *voluntary*: for no other exercise, *particularly on his principles*, can be a reasonable ground of any inward perturbation at all. And if this expression is designed to convey the idea of any *exercise of will*, or *voluntary exertion*, instead of weakening, it strengtheneth and confirmeth the argument under consideration. But if the Ex—r, by this expression, intends any thing which is wholly involuntary and undesigning; it is quite unjust to speak of *intentions* as being either good, or evil; or, to lead his readers to apprehend that there is any thing which ought to be, either *approved* or *condemned*, in *willingness* or *unwillingness* of mind.

IV. Another argument in favor of the definition which hath already been given of moral agency, is, that mankind are *agents* in nothing but *spontaneous, voluntary exertions*. Whatever event comes into existence, in which we have no voluntary intention and design; whatever effect is brought to pass, without any concurrence of our wills; is never deemed *our action*: we are not answerable for it. If we can plead that we were not *agents* in any affair; that any event, however disagreeable, hath taken place and existed otherwise than as the fruit of our *voluntary exertion*, and without the *concurrence* of our wills; this will ever be considered as sufficient to excuse and acquit us from any blame in the case: and for this very obvi-

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ous reaſon, viz. that nothing but our *own actions*—ſomething wherein we *exerted ourſelves*, and were *agents*—can, with any appearance of equity and juſtice, be charged to *our* account.

Let the queſtion be as it will reſpecting the *powers* of human nature; whether the volitions of agents are *ſelf-originated;* or, whether they derive from ſome foreign, extrinſic cauſe; ſtill nothing but the *exerciſe* of theſe powers in *voluntary exertions* can, with any propriety, be thought to *incur* cenſure, or merit commendation. Whatever are the powers of mankind, there is nothing more to be found *in the exerciſe* of theſe powers, than *voluntary, ſpontaneous exertion.*—Where we behold voluntary exertion, we behold every thing that can be found in the exerciſe of all thoſe faculties and powers, for which the moſt ſtrenuous advocate for the *powers* and *dignity* of human nature ever pleadeth. All the real benefit and privilege of any liberty that is ever inſiſted on as being eſſential to moral agency, is to be found in voluntary exertion. No notion of freedom, that has ever been eſpouſed and advanced, dignifieth mankind above this.

If it *is* true, as our Author urgeth, (p. 109) and as is univerſally inſiſted on by the advocates for a power of ſelf-determination in men, that *a freedom to either ſide* is eſſential to moral liberty, and conſiſtent with all principles of moral action, and all doctrine of any influence of motives upon the minds of men, which is capable of being vindicated and explained; yet this freedom to either ſide *is exerciſed* only in the mind's freely determining itſelf to *one ſide*, rather than the other. But ſuch a free determination of mind to one ſide, rather than the other, is nothing more than the mind's preferring the one to the other, by a free, *voluntary* determination. So that, upon the whole, nothing is found in the mind more than *voluntary, ſpontaneous exertion.* The higheſt powers of human nature, threrefore, that are ever boaſted of, when they come to be applied to uſe, and put forth into exerciſe, amount

amount to nothing more than *an act of choice or preference—free, voluntary, ſpontaneous exertion*. Even the doctrine of *internal liberty*, which the Ex---r ſo ſtrenuouſly urgeth in oppoſition (as he imagines) to Mr. *Edwards*, extendeth to nothing farther than a choice, preference, or preponderation of mind towards ſome certain objects rather than others; the whole of its benefit and exerciſe being comprehended in voluntary, ſpontaneous exertion.

V. In judging of human actions, and determining the nature and quality of them, mankind never carry their inquiries farther back than to the ſtate, temper or diſpoſition of the mind from whence the actions of men ariſe. When we have obtained a view of the diſpoſition, and are ſatisfied what was the internal ſtate of the mind—the voluntary exerciſe, in any outward action; we then immediately form our judgment and opinion, without once looking for the *cauſe* of that particular ſtate of mind, or voluntary exertion. A view or conviction of what *the heart* or *the affection* really is, or of what is indeed *the very choice of the mind*, always terminates the inquiry, and fixeth the judgment in regard to the beauty or deformity of the action. Upon this ground alone it is that we form our judgment of the characters of men, or any moral beings; determining and judging them to be either good, or bad, only by their *volitions*, and according to the nature of them. And if theſe obſervations are juſt (as every one I believe will find, upon a little reflection upon the exerciſes of his own mind in judging of actions and characters of men) it certainly followeth from them, that the reaſon and common ſenſe of mankind place the *exerciſe* of that liberty which is eſſential to the morality of actions and characters, in the *exerciſes* of the will—in voluntary exertion. And certainly no liberty can be of any benefit, otherwiſe than in uſe and exerciſe; which conſideration rendereth the inquiry after the *ſubſtratum* of liberty, in ſome myſterious, incomprehenſible power of ſelf-determination, quite nugatory and fruitleſs.

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Should it be objected, here, that we cannot reasonably conclude the character of any one to be morally bad, from the *exercises of his will*, otherwise than on the supposition of the *existence* of some powers in human nature *previous* to actual choice and volition; or, some sufficiency or ability in men to originate choice, and produce volition; and, therefore, that the criminality of *volitions* must be ultimately resolved into the state of the mind, or man, which was its proper and immediate cause: I say, should such an objection as this be urged against the argument under consideration, I would reply,

1. That this objection entirely divesteth volitions of all moral quality whatsoever, and placeth virtue and vice wholly in the *cause* of the voluntary exercises of our minds. It strips the exercises of men's wills of *moral quality*; as much as the consideration of their being the mere passive effects of *voluntary exertions*, doth *outward actions*. According to this objection, it is as impertinent to talk of the moral deformity and turpitude of *volitions*, any otherwise than in a relative, indirect view, as it is to speak of the moral evil of *outward actions*, otherwise than in reference to *internal*, *voluntary exercises* as their cause: a manner and figure of speech, on this supposition, as far-fetched and improper, as that would be which should attribute something morally wrong to the motion of a ball, struck by a bat in the hand of a voluntary agent. If there is any weight is this objection, whenever we speak of the moral evil of *volitions*, we must be understood, if we would be thought to talk with propriety and good sense, to predicate something morally bad of volitions, *only indirectly and figuratively*, and in a view of their standing in some particular relation to something which is wholly involuntary and undesigning. And if moral evil is to be sought in any thing wholly involuntary and undesigning, it will probably be difficult to give a reason why it should be sought, rather in the *cause* than in the *effect* of volition——in something which goeth

eth before it, rather than in what is conſequent upon it.

And beſides, if the moral evil of volitions (if indeed, on this ſuppoſition, there is any propriety in ſpeaking of *volitions* as being morally evil) conſiſteth in their cauſe, viz. *the ſtate of the mind*, or *diſpoſition of the man* (if the *cauſe* of voluntary exertion may be ſo ſtyled) by a parity of reaſon this *ſtate of the mind*, this *diſpoſition of the man*—being not itſelf uncreated, being not ſelf-originated—can, alſo, be conſidered as morally evil and bad, only indirectly and figuratively, and as related to *its* cauſe. If *volitions* may be excuſed from blame on account of their relation to *ſome cauſe*, the next and immediate cauſe of volitions (ſuppoſed to be the *particular ſtate of the mind, or man*) may likewiſe ſtand excuſed upon a like plea of relation to ſome ſtill more diſtant cauſe; and ſo on, until we get back to a cauſe which is firſt and original, ſtanding itſelf in no relation to any other antecedent or prior cauſe.

But if things which we have accuſtomed ourſelves to term morally evil and bad, are ſo only on account of their relation to ſomething elſe *which is their cauſe*; this *firſt*, this *original* cauſe, ſtanding in no ſuch relation to *any thing* elſe whatſoever, cannot, with the leaſt reaſon or propriety, have *moral evil* predicated of it. How ſubtil and ingenious are the devices of men, to ſhift off all blame from themſelves, and eaſe their minds of thoſe dark forebodings, and gloomy apprehenſions, which could not but poſſeſs and fill their minds, if they gave full ſcope to *reaſon*, and ſuffered *conſcience* to do its office! I am humbly of opinion, that ſuch a way of repreſenting the matter—ſuch groundleſs and ſubtil refinements—have a natural tendency to eraſe from the minds of men, all ſenſe of moral deſert, and at once ſet mankind looſe from all the ties of conſcience, and the reſtraints ariſing from the natural apprehenſions which poſſeſs us of our being accountable creatures, rewardable or puniſhable for our actions. And yet,

2. To

2. To ſuppoſe the evil of voluntary exertions ariſeth from the *badneſs of the diſpoſition, or ſtate of the man*, is to ſuppoſe that there is moral evil in the *diſpoſition itſelf, or ſtate of the mind*, out of which voluntary exertions ariſe; and from this ſuppoſition taketh all its ſtrength. But this is a ſuppoſition, we may at once ſee, importing that the moral evil of any thing conſiſteth in the *nature* of it, not in its *cauſe*:—a ſentiment very obnoxious to Gentlemen who plead (however inconſiſtent with themſelves *even in this very article)* that acts of the will are *ſelf-originated*—not ariſing from *any* foreign, extrinſic cauſe. After what the Ex—r hath ſaid concerning this ſentiment, we may juſtly conclude that he will not urge an objection which is incumbered with it. But this is not the only difficulty attending the objection under conſideration, in this particular form of it: For,

3. To ſuppoſe that the moral evil and ſinfulneſs of volitions conſiſteth in the particular ſtate or diſpoſition of the mind or man out of which they aroſe, is an argument founded wholly upon the ſuppoſition of a connexion of acts of the will, with ſome antecedent cauſe; and deriveth all its ſtrength from it. To reſolve the moral evil of *volition* into the *ſtate of the mind* from which it ariſeth, or the *diſpoſition of the man* whoſe volitions they are (conſidering *diſpoſition* as being ſomething perfectly diſtinct from voluntary exertion, and the *ground* of it) entirely eſtabliſheth the doctrine of *connexion* between the *volitions* of agents and ſome antecedent *cauſe*; yea, and *that* ſuch an one as is wholly extrinſic of volitions:—an opinion perfectly inconſiſtent with all ideas of a power of ſelf-determination in the will, or ſelf-origination of volition.

If there is *no connexion* between the volitions of agents, and any *antecedent* ſtate of the mind, or man, it is utterly unreaſonable to charge their iniquity and depravity to the account of ſuch a cauſe. Nor, indeed, is it reaſonable to charge the ſinfulneſs of *volitions* to any *cauſe* whatſoever. The ſinfulneſs of a

cauſe is one ſinfulneſs ; the ſinfulneſs of its *effect*, another. If the volitions of agents are ſinful, their ſinfulneſs lies in themſelves, and not in ſomething elſe. It is perfectly unintelligible, to talk of the ſinfulneſs of any thing, as being in *ſomething elſe* beſide the thing deemed ſinful. So that if the cauſe of ſinful volitions is *alſo* ſinful ; the volitions themſelves, likewiſe, are ſo : and, conſequently, there is moral agency in volitions, or voluntary exertions. If moral agency or liberty is eſſential to the accountableneſs of creatures, and their being the proper ſubjects of reward or puniſhment, praiſe or blame ; if there is *no connexion* between the volitions of agents and *any antecedent cauſe*, in determining the deformity and moral turpitude of *actions* ; we of conſequence have nothing to inquire into, beſide the *nature* of voluntary exertions. There is nothing which can, with any propriety, be termed either a good or a bad ſtate of mind, in a moral ſenſe, beſide volition, or voluntary exertion.

If there *is* a connection between antecedent ſtate of mind, and voluntary exertions ; this implieth all the neceſſity which that great Author, upon whom the Ex—r is animadverting, ever urgeth. This implieth a neceſſity as inconſiſtent with the Ex—r's idea of liberty, as the moſt obnoxious ſentiment of HOBBS, SPINOZA, or the late Mr. JONATHAN EDWARDS. And to concede any ſuch connexion, is utterly inconſiſtent with all ideas of that ſelf-origination of motion and volition, which our Author conſidereth as being eſſential to accountableneſs and liberty.

Theſe obſervations, if they are juſt, do certainly make it appear, that all the *ideas* we can have of moral deformity and turpitude, are to be found in ſpontaneous, voluntary exertion ; whatever we may *talk* of depravity and corruption, as conſiſting in the *cauſe* of human volitions—in ſomething which is involuntary and without deſign. This, therefore, is a ſtrong argument to the preſent point, viz. that moral agency conſiſteth in voluntary exertions.

VI. If

VI. If moral agency doth not conſiſt in ſpontaneous, voluntary exertion; it muſt, of courſe, conſiſt in ſomething which is wholly without volition and without deſign. No medium can be choſen betwixt *voluntary* and *involuntary*, which can poſſibly aſſiſt us in exploring the nature of that agency which is eſſential to virtue and vice, praiſe and blame. There is nothing we can behold, or any ways apprehend, which is neither voluntary nor involuntary, but holding a medium between them. Nothing, indeed, can be an object of human apprehenſion or conception, which doth not fall under either the one or the other of theſe predicaments. Every effect, every object which we behold, or of which we can form any manner of idea or conception, is either voluntary or the contrary.

For any one to urge, that moral agency conſiſteth in any thing which is *involuntary*—wholly without volition and deſign—is inconſiſtent with all the ideas of liberty which Gentlemen who are advocates for a power of ſelf-determination in men entertain, as well as with reaſon and common ſenſe. This opinion would place *liberty*, or moral *agency*, in that which is *no action at all*; it would predicate *moral quality*, of mere, neceſſary, involuntary effects.

If it ſhould be urged, that moral agency conſiſteth *partly* in voluntary exertion, and partly in ſomething which is *involuntary*; this would as truly, in a degree, contradict the natural, plain dictates of reaſon and common ſenſe, as the ſuppoſition that it conſiſteth in ſomething which is *wholly* involuntary and without deſign: for if virtue and vice may be predicated *in any degree* of that which is *involuntary*, the utter, entire involuntarineſs and undeſigning nature of any thing will be no proof that it is without *moral* quality, virtue or vice.

It therefore unqueſtionably appeareth, that all that moral agency which renders us fit ſubjects of reward or puniſhment, praiſe or blame, conſiſteth in *ſpontaneous, voluntary exertion*. We can give no deſcription of

any thing beſide this, which will comport with the common ideas and apprehenſions of men, concerning the nature of virtue and vice; and I may add, can *form no idea* of *moral action* different from this. In voluntary exertions are contained all the ideas of any liberty which is eſſential to our being accountable creatures—the proper ſubjects of reward or puniſhment, praiſe or blame. So unneceſſary is it to look beyond voluntary exertion for that liberty which is eſſential to the morality of actions, that it is quite inconſiſtent with it. Nothing which is involuntary, hath any degree of liberty or moral agency in it.

But in ſuch liberty, ſuch an agency, as this, the minds, the hearts, of men cheerfully and univerſally acquieſce. It is a dictate of the reaſon and the common ſenſe of men, that ſuch an agency as this renders men the fit ſubjects of puniſhment or reward. Upon this ground it is thought "we are condemned or approved of ourſelves, for a *willing* or an *unwilling* "*mind*; and have a natural apprehenſion, that the "judgment of God will ſecond our own." And when our Author ſpeaks of the *cultivation of the frame of the heart* as being ſomething morally good or evil, he cannot, I think, deſign to convey an idea, by the expreſſion, of any thing diſtinguiſhable from voluntary exertion—any thing which is involuntary, and in that ſenſe neceſſary.

If any one, therefore, inquireth, Wherein conſiſts that liberty which is eſſential to moral agency, virtue and vice?—it muſt be replied, In *ſpontaneous, voluntary exertion*. Unleſs the term *liberty* is uſed in a ſenſe ſo abſtracted and refined as to be incapable of explanation, this anſwer muſt certainly be ſatisfactory. In what is neceſſarily involved in the idea of our voluntary exertions, we find every thing that is eſſential to virtue and vice. And whenever we behold ſuch agency as this, we do neceſſarily, and without reaſoning and reflection, in a moral view, approve or diſapprove of it: nor doth any thing elſe ever gain our eſteem, or incur our diſapprobation.

I am ſenſible, that *power of will*, *power of choice*, *power of action*, &c. are expreſſions in common uſe among mankind; and muſt therefore be ſuppoſed to have a meaning, and contain ſome idea in them. We often hear men talk of a *power of action* as being neceſſary to moral agency; as it certainly is: but the word Power is of doubtful, uncertain ſignification, in this application of it. It will therefore be neceſſary particularly to inquire into the nature of Power, and (if we can) aſcertain the bounds, and deſcribe the meaning, of it. This ſhall be the buſineſs of the next ſection.

SECT. II.

Of POWER.

INQUIRIES into the nature of liberty and agency, it appears to me, have been greatly embarraſſed and perplexed by the vague and indeterminate ſenſe in which the word POWER hath been uſed in ſuch like diſputes. It ſeems to be often uſed to denote ſome *privilege*—ſome *ſufficiency* there is in men for ſome event, over and above any thing of which we are conſcious in mere voluntary exertion. Thus a power of thinking—of underſtanding—of will—ſeemeth, many times, to be conſidered as ſome *power*, *opportunity*, or *ſufficiency*, there is in men, to *begin* or *produce* thought, underſtanding or volition:—a *power*, conſequently, which is without thought, without underſtanding, and without will—a *power* ſtripped naked, and diveſted of every thing whereby it can ever poſſibly be known, diſtinguiſhed, or enjoyed. Even the accurate Mr. LOCKE ſpeaketh of *a power to begin actions of the mind, by a preference of the mind.* [See Hum. Und. Vol. I. Chap. 21. Sec. 5.] As if the *action* and *preference* of the mind were ſo different from each other, as that they might properly be treated of, as *cauſe* and *effect*!

Or,

Or, as if the mind was not always *in action*, when it *prefers* any thing!

The meaning of the word Power, as applied both to natural and moral things, requireth careful explanation. I ſhall examine the term, in the preſent ſection, with care and ſtrictneſs; endeavoring, as far as I am able, to clear the ſubject of the difficulties with which it hath uſually been perplexed. I beg the Reader's careful and candid attention to the following obſervations on the ſubject.

I. The word Power, as applied to natural, inanimate things, I believe, in common uſe, intendeth and implieth nothing more than *a fitneſs or capacity for being the ſubject of ſome certain effects, from external influence.* Thus there is a power of *fertility*, or of *being rendered fruitful*, in the earth; of *vegetation*, in plants and herbs; and, of *reſiſtance*, *elaſticity* and *motion*, in bodies. And all that we can conſiſtently mean, by ſuch like expreſſions, is, that the earth, and different bodies upon it, are ſubject to certain particular alterations and changes, from ſome certain kinds of influence and operation upon them. Where we behold, in natural bodies, certain viſible, diſcernible effects ariſe from the application or influence of ſome external cauſe; there we accuſtom ourſelves to ſpeak of bodies as having, or being endued with, certain *powers*. This ſuſceptibleneſs in bodies, of certain, particular kinds of influence; or, a fitneſs and adaptedneſs in them, to be the ſubjects of certain effects; we uſually expreſs by the term Power. Thus we find, by experience, that the air, under certain given circumſtances, is *expanded;* under others, *compreſſed:* hence we ſay, that the air hath a *power* of expanſion and compreſſion. But if we uſe the expreſſion with propriety, we can mean nothing more by it, than the foundation there is, in the nature of things, for certain diſcernible alterations and effects, in ſenſible things, from ſome particular kind of external influence and cauſe. But not having ever obſerved any ſuch effect in *water*, from

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any cauſe we have known to operate upon it; we ſay, *water* hath neither a *power of being expanded*, nor *compreſſed*: and yet, all that we can conſiſtently mean by ſuch an expreſſion, is, to deny any foundation, in the nature of things, for any ſuch effect in *water*, from the operation of any cauſe, or external influence, which hath ever fallen under our obſervation.

In a ſenſe ſimilar to this do we uſe the phraſes, Power of Motion—of Elaſticity—of Gravitation. We mean, by ſuch like terms and phraſes, to deſcribe ſomething which we call capacity in bodies of becoming the ſubjects of certain diſcernible alterations, and perceptible effects, from the operation and influence of ſome external cauſe: or (to ſpeak more philoſophically) we mean to expreſs *the foundation there is, in the nature of things, under certain given circumſtances, for ſuch perceptible, ſenſible effects.*

Theſe obſervations are ſufficient to determine the meaning of the word Power, when applied to mere ſenſeleſs, inanimate things; and ſhew, that we intend nothing more by it, than the capacity there is in material things, of being the ſubjects of certain diſcernible alterations and changes, upon the application of ſome external influence and operation: and this is, really, nothing more than the foundation there is in nature, for the taking place of effects, in a certain particular ſeries, connexion and order.

Theſe remarks, it is hoped, may furniſh us with ſome materials for a proper explanation of the *powers of human nature*; and for aſcertaining the meaning of the expreſſion.

The expreſſion, *the powers of human nature, when it is uſed in its real analogy to the word* POWER, *as applied to inanimate, material things*, can import nothing more than a capacity there is, in human nature, of becoming the ſubject of certain particular ſenſations, apprehenſions, and voluntary exertions. We have obſerved it to be a general law of nature, or rather of divine operation, that, under certain circumſtances,

men

men ſhould be the ſubjects of certain *feelings*, *exerciſes* and *ſenſations*. Accordingly we ſay, that man hath a power of thought—of underſtanding—and of will—to expreſs the different kinds of effect of which he may be the ſubject, under certain circumſtances, and from ſome particular influence and application. But when we ſpeak of men as having a power of *thinking* and *willing*, it is as diſtant from all reaſon and common ſenſe to conceive an idea, from this expreſſion, that men are *the ſubjects of their own influence*, in thinking and willing, as it is, from the ſimilar expreſſion, in reference to natural things, to conceive the earth itſelf, and natural bodies upon it, to be the *ſubjects of their own influence*, in attraction, vegetation, and the other ſenſible effects which we obſerve are conſtantly taking place in the material world. If the human mind *is the ſubject* of its own influence, in thinking and willing; it muſt be an influence that is exerted *without thought*, and *without deſign:* a conſideration, which at once takes away its ſufficiency for being *the cauſe* of thought, and of will. But it is no more agreeable to common ſenſe, to imagine that men are the *ſubjects of their own influence*, in thinking and willing, than, that matter is the *ſubject of its own influence on itſelf*, in that tendency we obſerve in the various parts of material things to each other, and to one common centre, which we mean to expreſs by the terms Gravitation and Attraction. It is quite as agreeable to common ſenſe, to ſuppoſe, that the tendency which we obſerve in natural bodies, upon the ſurface of our earth, to its centre, is the effect of ſome ſecret and very myſterious influence exerted *by the bodies themſelves upon themſelves*, cauſing them to gravitate toward the centre; I ſay, this is a ſuppoſition quite as agreeable to common ſenſe, as the opinion which ſuppoſeth that mankind exert an influence on themſelves, *cauſing them to put forth thought*, *and exert acts* of will. And one would render himſelf ridiculous to uſe the word Power, in reference to inanimate things, in ſuch a ſenſe as this;

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and to expreſs ſuch a mixed and inconceivable kind of influence: and would plainly ſhew himſelf to be an utter ſtranger to nature, and to its laws. And yet to conceive that the expreſſions, *The powers of human nature*, *The powers of mankind*, import that thoſe mental and moral exerciſes, which take place in rational, intelligent agents, are fruits and effects of ſome certain influence exerted by theſe ſame agents upon themſelves in order to *beget* and *produce* mental action and exertion, I muſt take liberty to be of opinion, is not at all leſs ridiculous and abſurd.

If any ſhould object, that, by the word Power, when applied to inanimate, material things, we mean ſomething wholly *natural*; but, by the ſame term, when applied to men, and expreſſing ſomething peculiar to rational, intelligent agents, we mean ſomething wholly *moral*; and that, therefore, there can be no juſt reaſoning from the one to the other--this would relieve no difficulty, nor at all aſſiſt and help our apprehenſions of the matter: for to ſay that the powers of matter are merely *natural*; whereas, by the acknowledgment of all, theſe powers of mankind, which are the ſubject of controverſy, are altogether of the *moral kind*; only expreſſeth the different kinds of effects, of which rational beings and inanimate things are the ſubjects, from the influence of ſome external influence or cauſe: the one of theſe effects we term *moral*, and the other *natural*; only becauſe the one is *voluntary*, the other *involuntary*: the diſtinction of terms refers only to the difference of the effects; and was made with no view to diſtinguiſh the nature and operation of the ſeveral *cauſes* of them. A *moral cauſe* ſignifieth a *voluntary*, *deſigning* one; a *natural*, one that is *without will* and *without deſign*: ſo alſo of effects which may be termed *moral*, and *natural*; we are to underſtand by the former, ſuch as are *deſigning* and *voluntary*; by the latter, ſuch as are *without deſign* and *without will*. The terms *moral* and *natural*, as uſed in this evaſion, are of the ſame import with *vo-*

luntary and *involuntary* (by *involuntary* meaning only *without all exerciſes of will*) and carry no other idea in them.

Hitherto, the Reader will keep in mind, I have treated of Power only as indicating a fitneſs in any thing to be the ſubject of particular influence; and to have certain effects appear in it, upon the application of ſuch influence to it. One thing which comes into conſideration, and is of importance, in determining the ſeveral natures of things, and their ſpecific differences from each other, is, their fitneſs and adaptedneſs to be the ſubjects of ſome certain kinds of influence; and to have certain effects appear in them, upon the application of ſuch influence to them, and its exertion upon them. Thus we find the air to be expanded by heat; and that bodies are moved by the influence of certain degrees of external force upon them. Upon this ground it is that we ſay the air has a *power* of expanſion; and bodies, the *power* of motion. So, from the influence of ſome cauſe or other, we find men to be the ſubjects of underſtanding and volition. Hence we ſay, they have a *power* of intellect, and a *power* of will.

This, it appears to me, is all that we can conſiſtently mean by the expreſſions, *A Power of Underſtanding*, and *Power of Will*, if we uſe them to denote any thing previous to all perception and voluntary exertion. When we behold theſe *effects*, as in other caſes, ſo in this, our minds frequently recur to a *cauſe*: and from an uniformity of effect, we infer uniformity of cauſe, and of its influence and operation. From a general uniformity, alſo, of divine operation (things continuing as they are) we conclude and infer a ſimilarity of effects, and look forward to it: we expect events to take place in the ſame ſeries and order, in which we have obſerved them already to come uniformly into exiſtence. That conſtitution and eſtabliſhment of things, which is the ground of ſuch like reaſonings, and the uniformity of their operation and iſſue, is what

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we mean to expreſs by the word Power, as applied to *natural things*; and, frequently, as applied to intelligent beings, or moral agents.

Not that I apprehend this to be the only ſenſe in which the word Power may be uſed with propriety, as applied to *moral agents—to men*. Far otherwiſe: for it may doubtleſs be uſed with propriety to indicate and point out ſome abilities properly *in men*—ſomething wherein man is a moral agent, and on account of which he is a fit ſubject of praiſe or blame, commendation or cenſure. The definition of Power, in this uſe and application of the term, as far as I am able, I ſhall preſently give. But it may be worth our while firſt to ſpend a little time in comparing the ideas of Power, entertained by thoſe Gentlemen who eſpouſe the doctrine of a contingency of events, with the definition which hath been already given; and ſee if theſe ideas are any where to be found in it.

If, by *a power of ſelf-determination*, as the phraſe is frequently uſed by Gentlemen on that ſide of the queſtion, and by the Author of the Examination of Mr. EDWARDS's Inquiry—*a power of will, a power of choice, &c.*—be meant nothing more than ſome foundation there is, in the nature of things, for our being the ſubjects of certain exerciſes of choice; Calviniſtic divines have no contention with them. If by *capacity of chooſing, faculty of will*, &c. be underſtood the foundation there is, in the nature of things, or the particular conſtitution of any being, for becoming the ſubject of ſuch kind of effects; the expreſſion will not lead to that confuſion which hath very generally attended the uſe of it. Uſed in this ſenſe, it will not carry away the mind into a dark apprehenſion of ſome ſecret and myſterious power, which exerteth influence upon itſelf, to rouſe up and firſt awaken itſelf into action:—a notion, than which nothing can poſſibly be more repugnant to itſelf, and to common ſenſe; or more directly and infallibly deſtroy and take away all ground and poſſibility of its own exiſtence. If there *is* any ſuch

power as this in human nature, it is by no means contained within the definition of power which hath been but now given. This definition is far from comprehending it: yea, I may ſay there muſt be a definition *coined* for it, and terms of greater energy, and more expreſſive, than our *dry*, *barren language* will afford, be inveſted to deſcribe, and in its full ſtrength expreſs, the idea, to the weak minds and feeble apprehenſions of men.

If men *may be* the ſubjects of volition and choice, it in no meaſure from thence followeth that they, by ſome mental exertion of their own, *originate* their own volitions. A fitneſs, or adaptedneſs, in any thing, to be the ſubject of *a certain kind of influence*, and, in conſequence of that influence, to have certain effects appear in it, doth, in no degree, *of itſelf*, determine whence this influence ariſeth—whether it is from within, or from without. For a perſon to be a ſubject *capable of having exerciſes of will*, and for him to *originate* theſe exerciſes, are two very different things; the propoſitions affirming them being no ways connected together. The power which Arminian divines plead for, and the power which hath now been defined, are ſo far from being one and the ſame, that they are entire oppoſites; at leaſt, ſtand in oppoſite relations to each other. The one is a power *to operate*; the other, a power *to be wrought upon*: the one puts forth power, and exerciſeth influence, in order to produce effects; the other is a fitneſs, or adaptedneſs, to have effects of a certain kind appear in it: the one is what Mr. LOCKE calls active power; the other, paſſive: the one *exerts* influence; the other is the *ſubject* of it. The Reader, I think, will very eaſily obſerve, that the idea of a power of ſelf-determination in the will, or of a ſelf-origination of motion within ourſelves, is no where to be found among the ideas contained in the definition of Power which hath been already given. The power which hath been already deſcribed is very different from that power of ſelf-determination in the will,

will, which is by many inſiſted on, as being eſſential to moral action—praiſe and blame, virtue and vice. I ſhall now,

II. Attempt to illuſtrate that idea of Power, which denoteth and indicateth ſome ability properly *in men*—ſomething wherein man is *a moral agent*, and in which there is deſert of praiſe or blame, eſteem or diſapprobation. Any power, which hath moral quality and deſert in it, neceſſarily implieth *exerciſe of will*, or *voluntary exertion*. Nothing ſhort of voluntary exerciſe incurs cenſure, or meriteth commendation; or is any way properly and directly the object of *affection*.

Such a power as this, as the word is generally uſed, implieth *ſufficiency for ſome certain event*. *That* is a power to perform any thing, which, when exerted, is productive of the deſired event. When any event taketh place *upon our chooſing it, and in connexion with our choice;* according to the uſe and import of the word in common language, we have the *power* of that event, or *power* to produce it. When the event, which is the object of choice, doth not follow the election of the mind, or voluntary exertion towards it; then, according to common language, it is not in our power. Any event which comes into exiſtence immediately upon our chooſing it, and whoſe exiſtence depends on the choice of our minds—as effects on their cauſes, and conſequents on their antecedents—may properly be ſaid to be *in our power*.

Only I deſire to have it remembered here, that Power, in this conſtruction of it, is not *eſſential* to moral agency, virtue and vice. The mind may be free, and exert itſelf with great ſtrength, without any of this power. There may be ſtrong exertions of mind toward ſome certain object, and yet its exiſtence be in no meaſure connected with theſe mental exertions towards it. But this want of connexion of event, with the choice of the mind, doth not at all deſtroy or take away that agency which hath virtue, or vice, directly predicable of it. The *endeavors* of a man may be

good,

or bad, in a moral ſenſe, and yet fail of ſucceſs. The moral beauty and deformity of *affections* do not at all depend upon their connexion with any outward event. This, I think, is agreeable to the common ſenſe of mankind.

Upon this ground it is, that "we are condemned "or approved of ourſelves, for a *willing* or *unwilling* "mind." Upon this ground it is, that we rate the character of a benefactor, or an enemy, by his *deſigns* and purpoſes towards us, as far as we are capable of diſcerning and diſcovering them; and not by his ability actually to aſſiſt or injure us.

To illuſtrate the idea of Power, in this latter conſtruction of the term, I would obſerve the following things.

1. That the object of power, when the word is uſed to denote ſome ability and ſufficiency properly *in men*, is ſomething future—ſomething diſtinct from preſent volition, or our preſent voluntary exertions. Preſent volition having already gained exiſtence, and therefore being *neceſſarily* what it is; it is now too late for any power to be exerted to determine the nature of it. It is altogether impoſſible that there ſhould be any cauſe, from the operation of which it can become true, that *preſent volition* ſhould be what it really is not, or not what it really is. New volitions, or a different ſtate of mind from what at preſent is, may be the fruit of the operation of ſome external cauſe; or, even of preſent voluntary exertion: but it is quite too late for any cauſe to exert its influence, or any power to be put forth, in order to determine or fix the nature of volitions which are already in exiſtence; or to preſcribe bounds and limits to them. Whatever is in exiſtence, is beyond the reach of any power which denoteth ſufficiency for the production of future event. There cannot be a more palpable impropriety, than to talk of having power over *preſent volitions*; either to produce or determine them; or in any meaſure alter or vary their real exiſtence, ſo as to take away their

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praiſe-worthineſs or vicioufneſs, or in any degree leſſen or magnify it.

2. Power implieth a connexion between the volitions of agents, and the event which is the object of volition. Whatever external action, or event, we find immediately taketh place, upon our willing or chooſing it, we accuſtom ourſelves to ſay, *is in our power*. It is difficult to conceive what idea men would convey by the expreſſion of events *being in our power*, beſide that of a conſtituted connexion between our voluntary exertions, and thoſe events which are their objects, and upon which they terminate. Thus we ſay, men have a power to *run*, *walk*, or *write*, whenever theſe actions are connected with the election and preference of the mind, and immediately take place upon becoming the direct objects of our choice. But if any one is under ſuch circumſtances as that theſe actions do not come into exiſtence and take place, immediately upon the choice and preference of his mind; they may, in that caſe, properly be ſaid to be *out of his power*. When we ſay that any thing *is out of our power*, we mean to deny a connexion between the event, and that act or exertion of our minds, whereby we chooſe and prefer it. Yet,

3. Many things may, with propriety, be ſaid to be *within our power*, which, nevertheleſs, do not *in fact* become the objects of our preference and choice. The actual exertion of the mind or will toward an object, is not eſſential to the idea of power, as the term is many times uſed. For if this were the caſe, men could not be ſaid to have *power* for any thing, otherwiſe than *in the actual performance* of it. They could not be ſaid to have power to *run*, *walk*, or *write*, otherwiſe than in actual running, walking and writing. But where we obſerve a conſtant connexion between certain mental exertions, and thoſe outward events which are their objects; where we obſerve events come into exiſtence in a particular relation to certain exertions of mind, chooſing and preferring them, and

following

following this choice and preference of mind, as effects do their cauſes ; this ſufficiently authorizes us to ſay, that the events, thus connected with human choice and preference, are *in the power* of men, even though they are not now actually choſen and preferred.

4. Power, therefore, ſtrictly ſpeaking (wherein the idea conveyed by the term is diſtinct from volition itſelf, and from any thing which has moral deſert *immediately* and *directly* predicable of it) is no more than a law of conſtant divine operation. It is nothing more than a divine conſtitution, or an eſtabliſhed connexion between human volitions and certain external events. It is a law of nature (to uſe the common mode of expreſſion) that walking or writing, for inſtance, ſhall uſually take place upon a man's choice or preference. And where we find this eſtabliſhment, it is ſufficient to juſtify the aſſertion, that theſe events are in men's power. But to ſpeak more philoſophically, and according to ſtrict truth, *It is agreeable to the manner of conſtant divine operation, for God to bring theſe events into exiſtence in a connexion with the choice and preference of our minds ; and only in that way.* No one ſuppoſeth, that without divine aids and efficiency, men have power to write, walk, or any thing elſe. But when God has ſo conſtituted the world, and our make and frame ; or, when it is the law and manner of conſtant divine operation, that theſe events ſhall immediately take place upon our chooſing them ; they are then *in our power*, as much as any thing *can be* in our power ; and as much as is neceſſary to our being either praiſed or blamed, for performing or neglecting them.

In theſe two definitions, I am humbly of opinion, are contained the whole of the idea of Power, as far as we have any neceſſary concern with the term, in our inquiries into moral agency and liberty.

Power muſt mean either *the fitneſs or adaptedneſs in things, to be the ſubjects of certain influences and effects ; or the foundation there is, in the nature of things, for that*

that order and connexion of events which we behold: or, *a connexion between the volitions of agents, and thoſe outward events which are their direct and immediate objects*. * In the former ſenſe of the term, men may be ſaid to have *powers of will, underſtanding*, &c. as they are ſubjects fitted for having ſuch effects take place in them; or, as they are adapted to receive, or be the ſubjects of, that kind of influence which is the *cauſe* of human underſtanding and will. Thus the air is fitted for receiving that kind of influence, and being the ſubject of it, which is the *cauſe* of its being expanded or compreſſed: and on this ground we ſay the air hath a *power* of expanſion and compreſſion. In the latter ſenſe of the term Power, men may be ſaid to be endowed with it, in all thoſe inſtances wherein there is an eſtabliſhed connexion between preſent voluntary exertion, and thoſe external actions and events which are its next and immediate objects. By *external action or event*, I mean any thing whatſoever, which is extrinſic of that *mental* and *voluntary exertion*, which chooſeth and terminateth upon it. There is, doubtleſs, ſo near a relation of human volitions themſelves, in many inſtances, to one another; and they take place in ſuch a ſeries, order and connexion with each other; that, in many caſes, our own acts of will may in ſome ſenſe be ſaid to be in our power. This matter I will endeavour more particularly to explain preſently.

To obſerve order, here ſeems to be the proper place to inquire, whether the idea of a ſelf-origination of motion, or ſelf-determining power, in men, is any where to be found within the *latter definition* of power.

A little attention will convince any one, that the power which is pleaded for, by Gentlemen on that ſide

* If any one imagines that the power which we attribute to the ſun, of exhaling vapour; and to fire, of burning, &c. are not comprehended under either of the definitions of power which have been given; I am content that they ſhould be made a diſtinct claſs, rather than diſpute with any one about it. It muſt doubtleſs be acknowledged, however, that there is no proper efficiency either in the ſun or the fire; nor are the powers of the ſun and fire, ſtrictly ſpeaking, any thing more than the foundation there is, in the nature of things, for that order and connexion of events, which we behold, as expreſſed above.

of the queſtion reſpecting power, can have no place under the *laſt* definition. The power which they contend for as being eſſential to moral agency and liberty, is ſomething *antecedent* to all voluntary exertion, and is the proper *ground* and *cauſe* of it. The power which was laſt defined, is, ſufficiency in *preſent voluntary exertion*, for ſome future *external event*. Of *that* power, voluntary exertion is the effect and fruit: of *this*, it is the *cauſe* of ſome other event; and is conſidered only in relation to its effect, without any reference, one way or another, to its cauſe. The power for which Arminian divines are advocates, is, a power to *begin motion*, even internal motion or volition: this power relates only to the production of ſome *effect*, by a motion *already begun*. That is a power which lieth in ſomething *antecedent* to voluntary exertion: this conſidereth voluntary exertion itſelf wholly as *cauſe*, and the ground of ſome external event or effect. In that, the diſpute ſeems to be reſpecting the *cauſe* of voluntary exertion: in this, reſpecting the *efficiency* of voluntary exertion itſelf, as *cauſe* of ſome future, conſequent event.

But it is quite unneceſſary to carry the compariſon any further, in order to illuſtrate the difference of theſe ſeveral kinds of power; as it is probable that none of the advocates for a power of ſelf-determination in men, will ever urge that the idea of that power which they contend for, is contained under this definition: or, indeed, under either of the definitions of the term power, which have as yet been given. If they ſhould, Calviniſtic divines, and ſuch as are of opinion that all voluntary exertion *in creatures* ariſeth from ſome cauſe extrinſic of themſelves, will no longer pretend to maintain a controverſy with them *relative to power*; unleſs it be reſpecting the propriety of the terms they make uſe of to convey their ideas of the Powers of Mankind: and here they may, doubtleſs, manage one to great advantage.

If the fitneſs, or adaptedneſs, of any creature or thing

thing, to become the ſubject of ſome certain influence *from without ;* and, in conſequence of that influence, to have *ſome certain effects appear in it ;* together, alſo, with the ſufficiency which now actually appeareth in it for ſome *external conſequent* effect : if, I ſay, theſe two definitions do not contain the whole of the idea of any power which can, with the leaſt propriety, be predicated of any *mere creature ;* the advocates for a power of *ſelf-determination* in men will open a new ſource of knowledge, by explaining thoſe boaſted powers of mankind, wherein, they urge, the *principal dignity* of human nature conſiſteth.

Should it be here ſaid, that no one ever pretended to plead for any powers in human nature, over and above *a ſufficiency in what now actually exiſts in a ſubject, for ſome future event ;* that the power they plead for is *a ſufficiency in* MEN *for the production of volition*—this ſufficiency lying in the power which is the *cauſe*, and volition itſelf being the *effect* : ſhould ſuch a plea as this be made, it would be quite deficient in anſwering the purpoſes for which it is urged ; and that, two ways :

1. It cannot rationally be ſuppoſed, that the Power in men, which is conſidered as the *cauſe* of volition, doth any thing, or is *effectual* to any thing, any otherwiſe than in *actual exerciſe*. To treat of any thing in the light and under the character of *cauſe*, and yet conſider it as *doing nothing—exerting no influence*—is at once to diveſt it of all the qualities and ideas of a cauſe, and ſtrip it naked of every thing on the account of which there is the leaſt reaſon to apprehend any ſufficiency in it, for any future, external event. For volition to be the effect of ſuch a cauſe as this (could any ſuch cauſe be conceived of) would be as utterly inconſiſtent with thoſe ideas of Liberty which are pleaded for by the advocates for a power of ſelf-determination in men, as any Neceſſity which can be conceived of or named. To urge that *volition* ariſeth from ſuch a cauſe as this, is to aſſign it an *involuntary*

cauſe—one that is not *active*, but perfectly *paſſive*; which muſt neceſſarily, according to their ideas and definitions of it, utterly deprive it of all *freedom*.

2. If it ſhould be ſuppoſed that this power produceth volition *by its exerciſe*, in order, ſtill, to anſwer the purpoſes of the advocates for it; it muſt be preſumed that the exerciſe is *voluntary* and *free*; otherwiſe, the volition which is its fruit and effect, upon their principles, cannot be free. But if the exerciſe of this power is *voluntary*, then that which is conſidered as the *cauſe* of volition, is *voluntary exertion*; which at once taketh away all its diſtinction from volition itſelf, and utterly confounds the *cauſe* with its *effect*.

It may in this place be proper to obſerve ſomething reſpecting the *connexion* of human volitions one with another; as it may ſerve to give ſome fuller view and clearer idea of the nature of the *powers* under conſideration. I beg the Reader's candid attention to the following obſervations.

1. It ſeems that God hath eſtabliſhed a connexion in ſome caſes between human volitions of a certain kind, in a continued ſeries and ſucceſſion; ſo that the whole chain, or ſeries, ſhall ariſe out of that which is *original* in it; each ſucceſſive volition growing, as it were, out of its next preceding one as its cauſe. This, indeed, is manifeſtly the caſe of all human volitions, as to their *genus*—that which denominates them either *morally good*, or *morally evil*. This eſtabliſhment, *in thoſe two grand points*, took place in the firſt of mankind. It was the appointment and conſtitution of God, that, if Adam retained his integrity, and perſiſted in innocency, through the propoſed time of his trial, all human nature, which ſhould afterward come into being, ſhould be of the ſame general, excellent kind, viz. *holy*. It was God's law or conſtitution, on the other hand, if Adam fell, that human nature ſhould all come into being *ſinful*; and that it ſhould always continue ſo, unleſs ſome *new and ſpecial diſpenſation and conſtitution reſpecting the human race* ſhould be introduced. Adam,

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in fact, did fall: this determined the point in respect to his posterity, that they should all come into the world *sinful*. To this divine establishment or constitution do the scriptures direct us to look, for the reason why mankind are now universally brought into existence in such a corrupt and fallen state.

2. Wherein there is such an established connexion taking place betwixt human volitions of a certain kind, *acts of will* may, *in some sense*, be said to be *in our power*. If there is a divine establishment, whereby it becometh certain, or is agreeable to the common, fixt law and method of divine operation, that the nature of our future volitions shall be determined by the present; or, whereby it becometh certain that our future exercises of will shall be agreeable, in kind, to our present; this brings our future exercises *in this respect* within our power. An *act of will*, which is connected with our present voluntary exercise, may as properly be said to be in our power, as any *outward event* standing in the same connexion. If outward events are said to be in our power, only because of their connexion with our exercises of will; then any future volitions themselves, also, may be said to be in our power, as far as they stand in a similar connexion with present choice and exercises of will.

3. It therefore appeareth, that all those voluntary exercises and affections, which are required of us in the divine law, may be said to be *in our power*. There is no opposition to any obedience which is claimed by the divine law, except it be in our wills. This kind of opposition, in other matters, is never considered as taking away our power. Men are subjects capable of receiving those influences from without, which are the proper and direct *cause* of holy affections; and are subjects properly fitted for having such effects appear in them. A continued series of holy exercises are, by divine constitution, certainly connected with the first and lowest degree of that kind of desire which we are called to in the gospel. This series of holy exercises

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may therefore be ſaid to be in our power; and men may be ſaid to have power to "make them new hearts," and "turn from their evil ways unto the Lord."

Nor doth ſuch a repreſentation of the matter in any meaſure remove the true ground of the neceſſity there is of divine and ſupernatural influences on the hearts of men, in order to their being brought, in any degree, to the true knowledge and love of God. Man is not poſſeſſed of an *independent power for any thing*. The concurrence and influence of an omnipotent power are, really, as eſſential to our moving a finger, or drawing a breath, as to our becoming true goſpel penitents and believers: and yet we ſcruple not to ſay, that men have *power* to move and to breathe. So, becauſe *ſpecial* divine influences and omnipotent power are abſolutely neceſſary to any holy, right and ſpiritual exerciſes in the heart of a ſinner; there is no more reaſon, *on that account*, to deny it to be in the power of men to be holy, than there is to deny it to be in their power to move and breathe, *becauſe* of a neceſſity of the concurrence of divine aids, to the actual taking place of the event. I therefore proceed to obſerve,

4. That this divine eſtabliſhment, or conſtitution of things, whereby it becometh certain that the volitions of moral agents ſhall take place in a certain ſeries and order, and be, in the manner before deſcribed, connected together, is all, I humbly conceive, that we can conſiſtently mean by the terms Habit, and Temper, when they are intended to expreſs any thing previous to voluntary exertion or inclination, and diſtinct from it. When we ſay, for inſtance, that it is the *nature* or *temper* of a man to be covetous, or profuſe; we mean only to expreſs the connexion we apprehend there is between his *preſent covetings*, and *future avariciouſneſs of inclination*; or, the connexion there is between *preſent profuſion*, and *future prodigality and diſſipation*.

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On this ground it is, or on account of the connexion we have uſually obſerved between preſent exerciſes of volition, and future voluntary exertions of the ſame general nature and tenor, that we form a judgment of the *future* conduct of men, by their *preſent characters*; juſt as we form a judgment of future events, in the natural world, by what are commonly called the Laws of Nature, by which our material ſyſtem is governed. But yet Philoſophers allow, that what are commonly termed the Laws of Nature, reſpecting the material world, are, ſtrictly ſpeaking, no more than a fixt, eſtabliſhed method of conſtant divine operation. It is, likewiſe, equally unqueſtionably true, reſpecting the *tempers* and *diſpoſitions*, or *moral habits*, of mankind (which ſeem to be the general law according to which moral events take place) that they are no more than certain laws, or methods of conſtant divine operation. And this notwithſtanding, it may as properly be ſaid, that it is the *nature* of a wicked man to do wickedly, as it is the nature of a tree to bear its fruit, or of an acorn to produce an oak.

Theſe obſervations, if juſt, may poſſibly afford ſome light into an event which hath generally been eſteemed myſterious, and to be of difficult ſolution: I mean the Fall of our Firſt Parents from their original ſtate of perfection and purity, into a ſtate of infinite ruin and guilt.

The few following obſervations upon this point are humbly ſubmitted to the careful inquiry and candid examination of the intelligent Reader.

1. It appeareth, from the foregoing obſervations, that Adam *in innocency* had not a holy *temper*, or the *habit* of holineſs. Such a temper, or habit, was to be gained by his own diligent endeavours, and a faithful improvement of the talents committed to him. This was to be the fruit of the exerciſe of his own *free will*. I would by no means be underſtood to intimate, that the original innocency of our firſt parents conſiſted in a mere *negation* of all moral evil: for, their firſt and original

original exercises were, doubtless, holy—positively virtuous and good. But *habit*, or *temper*, is formed by the establishment of a connexion between our *present* and our *future* exercises, and a kind of dependence of the latter on the former. And on account of such a connexion as this, which we generally observe to take place, it is, that the truth of that common observation is wholly founded, that "old habits are rarely overcome." But such a fixt establishment and constitution, respecting the voluntary exercises of Adam's mind, had not yet taken place: such an establishment being all the *confirmation* which he ever would have had in his *holy* and happy state, if he had retained his integrity, and persisted in innocency, through the proposed time of his trial.

Habit and Temper mean nothing more than a certain fixt connexion between our *present* exercises of will, and *future* voluntary exertions *of the same general nature and denominations*. Respecting Adam, it was the decree of God, that *one sinful* exercise should form a *temper*, or *habit*; such an exercise being certainly and infallibly connected with consequent sinful exercises and volitions. But, on the other hand, a holy *temper*, or the *habit* of holiness, was to be contracted and formed only by a *number* and *series* of holy exercises of soul. This consideration may, by the way, lead us to observe a difference in Adam's state of trial, from that of any of his posterity—a difference in favour of the latter. Adam was to persist in obedience *for a certain time*, and have A NUMBER and *series* of holy exercises, before that fixt and certain connexion *between present and future exercises of the same general nature and denomination*, which we mean to express by the terms Habit and Temper, might take place. But it is now become a gracious constitution of God, and the subject of a promise to men, that Habit shall be formed by *one such exercise as we are called to in the gospel*: perseverance in holiness, and eternal life, being certainly and infallibly connected with the first and lowest

loweſt degree of hearty compliance with the propoſals of the goſpel.

2. It hence appeareth, that the firſt ſin and fall of Adam were not in oppoſition to the *habit* and *temper* of his mind; though this act was in direct oppoſition to all the *former moral exerciſes* of it. All that makes it ſo inconceivable to us, that any one ſhould act and conduct in oppoſition to the *temper* and *habit* of his mind, is, the connexion we have obſerved invariably to take place (unleſs there is ſome manifeſt and ſpecial divine interpoſition to the contrary) between preſent exerciſes of will, and future voluntary exertions of the ſame general nature and denomination. If we had not been wont to find ſuch a connexion in things, and ſo accuſtomed to look for and expect it; it would appear nothing ſtrange or ſurpriſing to us, to find in men a direct oppoſition between their *preſent* and *paſt* inclination and will; or, to expect a like oppoſition in exerciſes to come. Were it not that our ideas and conceptions of things were turned into a particular channel, and formed, as it were, in a certain mould, by our obſerving ſuch a connexion in human volitions, and ſuch an invariable law of operation reſpecting their coming into exiſtence; there would appear nothing ſtrange, nothing embarraſſing, in the opinion, that men might turn alternately from ſin to holineſs, and from holineſs to ſin: as we ſee the matter in fact exemplified, in the caſe of our firſt parents, and thoſe of their poſterity who become true converts to the religion of Chriſt.

The fall of our firſt parents was an event inconſiſtent with ſuch a connexion in things as hath been deſcribed; and utterly irreconcilable with *habit* and *temper*, in this conſtruction of the terms. But this difficulty will at once ſubſide, if we recollect, that, in reſpect to Adam in innocency, there was no ſuch connexion took place: he had no holy *habit* of mind, and *temper* of ſoul, to ſin againſt and reſiſt. And *as to any difficulty ariſing from temper*, it is no more inconceiva-

ble how Adam ſhould *ſin*, than how he ſhould *continue to be holy*. There is, I would beg leave to obſerve, no difficulty at all, reſpecting the fall of Adam from his original ſtate of perfection and purity, into a ſtate of ſin and guilt, which is any ways *peculiar*, and doth not equally preſs the argument in general reſpecting the taking place of *any* ſin, and the *admiſſion* of it into God's world.

If, indeed, we would maintain a proper idea and ſuitable ſenſe of the conſtant, immediate dependence of all creatures and things on God; and would duly conſider how utterly unconnected human volitions in themſelves are, and in their own nature, abſtractly conſidered, and aſide from any *particular divine eſtabliſhment and law of operation* reſpecting their taking place; if theſe things, I ſay, were duly conſidered and kept in view, I muſt take liberty humbly to expreſs it as my opinion, that we ſhould not find ourſelves ſo embarraſſed and perplexed in the argument reſpecting Adam's original ſin and fall.

But it is time to conclude the ſection on Power, and proceed to conſider the doctrine of Motives; which is a ſubject of importance in the preſent inquiry. This ſhall be the buſineſs of the next ſection.

SECT. III.

Wherein the Nature and Influence of MOTIVES *are carefully examined and explained.*

THE uſe and application of the term MOTIVE, in moral eſſays and metaphyſical diſquiſitions, is frequently ſuch as tendeth to beget an apprehenſion in the Reader, that the *mind* is the *paſſive ſubject* of the influence of motives; that there is ſomething very nearly reſembling an active power and agency in them, to produce effects on the mind; or, at leaſt, that they are the *means*, or inſtruments, whereby God *awakeneth* the

the mind into ſenſation, perception and choice. The human mind ſeems, many times, to be conſidered as being *moved* and *determined* by motives; in the ſame manner as clocks and watches are moved and determined by weights and ſprings. It is apparent, that in theſe machines every degree of motion in the wheels is the *effect* of *antecedent* influence upon them, from the weights and ſprings. The ſpring of a watch puts forth and exerteth its influence, *previous* to the motion of any of its wheels; and the motion of the wheels is wholly the *fruit* and *effect* of external influence. So, of a clock, and its weights. But in a ſenſe ſimilar to this it cannot, I believe, properly be ſaid, the mind of man is *governed* by *motives*, and ſubject to their influence. Motives have no influence, otherwiſe than in their being actually perceived. They obtain the appellation of *motives*, only in the mind's *feeling* their influence, or being *in actual motion* in the view of them. And when the mind feels, or perceives, the influence of a motive; it is then too late for the motive to *produce* effects on the mind—*exciting* it to motion, choice, or action; the mind being already *moved*, the will *exerted*, toward ſome certain object; and *choice* having gained exiſtence. Motives, as being wholly unperceived, have no tendency to move the mind, or engage election; and, as to the perſon unconſcious of them, do not obtain that appellation. Beauty, for inſtance, ſo long as it is wholly unperceived, hath no tendency to produce love, and engage affection: it doth not, antecedent to its being perceived, exert any influence upon the mind, which exciteth it to motion and affection: when it *is* perceived, it is too late for it to exert influence upon the mind, in order to *excite* its choice; it being *already reliſhed*, and, of courſe, *choſen*. *In the mind's perceiving* any thing, which is fitted, by the nature and conſtitution of it, to be an object of its affection, is really all the choice which is ever made of it. Nothing that is, in its nature, the object of affection, is ever either choſen, or refuſed, with any

feeling, exerciſe, or perception of mind, different from what is neceſſarily and certainly implied *in the mind's perceiving it*.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that the mind may perceive a *beautiful object*, and yet, by reaſon of the particular ſtate or frame of the mind, have no reliſh of it; and it ſhould from hence be urged, that the perception of object or motive is antecedent to choice, and conſequently is a perception which doth not neceſſarily imply choice and preference in it; in anſwer to ſuch an objection, I reply, that, as the caſe is here ſtated, and under ſuch circumſtances, *beauty* is not, according to the common acceptation of the term, conſidered as being any motive, or having the influence of a motive, upon ſuch a mind. Without all queſtion, the mind may have ſome kind of perception of an object which is abſolutely, in itſelf, beautiful; and, at the ſame time, inſtead of reliſhing and chooſing, have a great degree of diſaffection and averſion to it. Yet it cannot properly be ſaid, that the mind *perceiveth the beauty* of the object. For the mind to be affected by the motive of beauty, and perceive the influence of ſuch a motive to love an object, is, in fact, to perceive the beauty of the object, or the very thing or quality in it, which the mind doth reliſh in its *chooſing* it. And for the mind to have ſuch a perception of the beauty of an object, *is all the choice* of the object which ever taketh place. The mind hath no perception relative to it, different from the *perception of its beauty*, which, with any propriety, can be called *chooſing* it. There is no action of the mind towards it, beſide what is neceſſarily included in the idea of the perception of its beauty. The perception of the beauty of an object may be the proper cauſe, or ground, of ſome *outward action* relative to it; but it is not the cauſe and ground of *choice*, nor any thing diſtinct from it.

The caſe is exactly parallel, in regard to the mind's refuſing and rejecting any thing. That which diſpleaſeth and diſguſteth the mind, is not firſt perceived,

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and, in conſequence of that perception, rejected: for a perception of the diſguſtful, diſpleaſing quality, is all the action, motion, or perception, the mind ever feels, and of which it is ever conſcious, in refuſing and rejecting it.

It hence appeareth, that there is an utter impropriety in ſaying that the mind is *governed* and *determined by motive;* if the expreſſion is deſigned to repreſent motive as the *cauſe*, and choice or volition its *effect*. In the ſenſe wherein it may truly be affirmed, of moral, intelligent beings, that they act in the view of motives, and are under the influence of motives; that choice of mind and voluntary exerciſe which is, properly and in the moſt ſtrict ſenſe, *their action*, and the *influence of motives on their minds*, are by no means to be conſidered as ſuſtaining that relative diſtinction which is conveyed by the terms *cauſe* and *effect*. To view the matter in ſuch a light as this, would lead to evident inconſiſtency and confuſion.

There are but two ſenſes in which the term Motive is commonly made uſe of among men. In the firſt of theſe, it importeth the *very choice of the mind itſelf:* in the ſecond, the *external object* or *quality* which doth, or ought to, terminate it, and which is exhibited as a reaſon, in the view of which the mind ought to act, either in chooſing, or refuſing.

I. The word Motive, as it is very frequently uſed in common converſation, importeth no more than ſome certain perception of the mind, and nothing different from the *real choice* and *exerciſe* of it. The word Motive is very often uſed to expreſs the views and choice of the mind, in diſtinction from outward act, or object. It is more commonly uſed, I believe, in this ſenſe, than in any other; it being very rarely uſed in ſuch a ſenſe as to carry our thoughts back to the *cauſe* of choice or voluntary exertion. Uſually where it is ſo applied as to lead the mind to conſider *any thing* in relation to its *cauſe*, it is *outward action*. When *motive* is conſidered as *cauſe* or *antecedent*, its *correlative* is *outward action* Thus

Thus by the *motive of action* we moſt commonly mean that particular view, ſtate or exerciſe of *mind*, which is the next and immediate cauſe or ground of outward action. In this ſenſe we always uſe the word when we ſpeak of inquiring into the *motives* of men, in order to judge of the nature of their actions; or, rather, of their characters by their actions. It ſeems to be an eſtabliſhed ſentiment—a maxim among mankind—that nothing giveth moral denomination to outward actions, but the internal, mental views and diſpoſition from whence they ariſe. On this ground it becometh a dictate of common ſenſe, to inquire into the *motives* of the actions of men, and be well ſatisfied what *they* were, in order to form any certain judgment or determination concerning them: meaning, by *motives*, nothing prior to the acts and exerciſes of the mind, or diſtinct from them. Accordingly, the word Motive, as it is very frequently uſed among men, intendeth *mental exerciſe itſelf—voluntary exertion*. When it bringeth the idea of *cauſe* at all into view, it is in relation to *external action* as its effect.

II. The word Motive, when it is not uſed in the forementioned ſenſe, denoteth the external object which doth, or ought to, engage the affection, and terminate the choice. Here it is uſed, neither for volition itſelf, nor for the cauſe of volition; but merely for external object.

1. The word Motive, when it implieth ſomething diſtinct from mental exerciſe—the internal diſpoſition—is many times uſed to ſignify an object which *ought* to excite and engage the affections. Thus we ſpeak of motives of intereſt, of hope, of fear, of friendſhip, &c. Here we mean *reaſons* drawn from the conſideration of intereſt, or friendſhip, which do, or ought to, engage our attention, and excite ſome affection: or, reaſons and conſiderations adapted to influence hope, or fear. Which is as much as to ſay, that, in the view and conſideration of certain reaſons or truths exhibited to us, we commonly do, or ought to, *feel a concern*

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for our own intereſt; or, *exerciſe* hope, fear, friendſhip, &c. Or, which is the ſame thing, in the view and contemplation of ſome certain reaſons and truths, we ought, and it would be ſuitable, to exerciſe hope; in others, fear; in others, friendſhip. In this ſenſe we uſe the phraſe, *The motives of the goſpel;* meaning only *the reaſons exhibited in the goſpel*, why men ought to forſake their ſins, and turn unto God; or, the conſiderations which do, or ought to, have the weight of reaſons with us for turning unto God. The *motives* of the goſpel mean the reaſons there exhibited, why it is ſuitable and proper that we ſhould forſake our ſins, and become true penitents and believers. In the inſtances which have been mentioned, it is evident that the term *motive* expreſſeth and denoteth merely external object, without bringing the idea of *cauſe* at all into view. It is very manifeſt, that by the term *motive*, as applied in the forementioned caſes, is not commonly underſtood *cauſe*. The *motives* held up to view in the goſpel, to induce and perſuade men to turn from ſin to God, and the *cauſe* of the actual turning of men—or that efficiency which produceth this effect—are two quite different things. Multitudes have many of theſe reaſons (motives) full in view; and yet utterly refuſe and neglect to return. So multitudes behold thoſe reaſons and objects, in the view of which it would become them to exerciſe hope, fear, friendſhip, &c. and yet this view is accompanied with none of theſe effects. The *cauſe* why men are influenced as they ought to be by *reaſons* and *motives*, and the reaſons and motives themſelves in the view of which *they are influenced*, are quite two things, altogether different from each other. The *cauſe* of the mind's cloſing with reaſon and truth, is one thing; the *reaſon* and *truth* with which it cloſeth, is another. The *cauſe* of voluntary exertion, is one thing; and the *objects* in the view of which intelligencies do exert their wills, is another. The word *motive* is never uſed to denote the former; but often, the latter. It often meaneth

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the *reaſon* by which, or in the view of which, men ought to feel themſelves biaſſed and influenced; but never the *cauſe* why they do, in fact, feel themſelves influenced and biaſſed *by reaſon*. Accordingly,

2. When we inquire upon what *motive* it is that any one chooſeth or reliſheth any particular object; we mean, by the inquiry, only to know what certain quality it is, in a more complex and general object, which engageth the attention, and terminates the choice and affection. If it be inquired, for inſtance, upon what *motive* a man entertains an affection for a certain woman; all that is ſought for in the caſe, is the particular quality in, or belonging to, the object, which engageth the choice, and terminates the affection; whether it is wit, beauty, virtue, or a good fortune. So, likewiſe, if we aſk upon what *motives* a man preferreth a private life to a public; we only mean to inquire, what are the particular objects, or circumſtances, attending ſuch a ſituation, which engage his choice and attention, and on account of which ſuch a ſituation appeareth preferable to him. Accordingly, if the object reliſhed or choſen is a ſimple idea, it would be eſteemed quite impertinent to ſay any thing about *motive* one way or the other. Thus if any one ſhould inquire of another why, or upon what *motive*, he reliſhed the taſte of an orange, or the ſmell of a roſe, he would not be thought to deſerve an anſwer: he might, with as much reaſon and propriety, inquire why the ſky looks blue, or the ſun bright.

Theſe things I obſerve, to ſhew that the word Motive, as in common uſe among men, never importeth the *cauſe* of voluntary exertion—the *efficient reaſon* of its being brought into exiſtence; but always, either the volition—the voluntary exertion itſelf—or the object which terminates the will, and engageth the affection. When we inquire for the motive of *outward action*, the term always denoteth *volition*. When we inquire upon what motives a perſon *chooſeth* this thing, or the other; the ſenſe of the word Motive is always confined to *outward object*.

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When we ſay, that the MIND never acteth without motive, or that there is never *an act of choice* without a motive; the ſenſe of the word motive muſt be confined to external object. If we uſe the term, in this caſe, in the ſame ſenſe in which we do when we are inquiring the reaſons, or *motives*, of the outward conduct of men; it will lead to moſt manifeſt confuſion. The *motive* of *outward action* is volition—internal, mental exertion. To ſay, therefore, that the *mind* never *acteth* or *chooſeth* without a motive (the term ſtill retaining the ſame ſenſe which it doth when given as a reaſon, ground or ſpring of outward action) is the ſame as to ſay, that the mind never *acteth* or *chooſeth*, unleſs when it is influenced thereto by its own action and choice; that is, that there is no action or choice of the mind, but ſuch as hath its ſource, ground or ſpring in its own antecedent action and choice: which a little attention will ſhew to be ridiculous and abſurd.

But if by the term Motive we mean external object, and ſay that there can be no act of choice without a motive, the aſſertion will undoubtedly be juſt. Choice and affection always imply object; they always terminate upon ſomething. It is ridiculous to talk of choice without *motive*, in this ſenſe of the term: this would be to ſuppoſe that the mind exerteth an act of choice, and yet chooſeth nothing; that the mind chooſeth, and yet nothing is choſen: that is, that the mind chooſeth nothing, and conſequently maketh no choice.

But having explained the term MOTIVE, and mentioned the ſeveral ſenſes in which the word is uſed in common language among men, it may be proper to inquire, more particularly, what *influence* motives can have, in determining the volitions of men. The volitions of men are often repreſented as being under the *influence* of motives, and *determined* by them; and motives are treated of as *cauſes* of acts of the will. It will be impoſſible to judge what influence motives have in the taking place of human volition, and in *determin-*

ing and *cauſing* acts of the will, without fully underſtanding, and fixing preciſely, the meaning of the terms Cauſe, Influence, Determination, &c. as they are commonly made uſe of, relative to the preſent argument. For the better underſtanding of this matter, I would obſerve the following things.

1. That the *influence* of motives upon the minds of men, and the *efficient cauſe* of volition, are far from being one and the ſame thing. When we ſpeak of voluntary exertion as being *under the influence* of motive, and acts of will as being *determined* by motive; it is not to be underſtood, that we are treating of the *efficient cauſe* of volition, or that power and efficiency which *originates* the exiſtence of ſuch an event, and exerteth active, cauſal influence for the production of it. When we are treating of the *cauſes* of things, we generally uſe the term Cauſe in a more large and general ſenſe; rarely deſigning to treat of the *efficient reaſon* of their exiſtence, or make that a ſubject of debate. Philoſophers do not uſe the term in this ſenſe, in their phyſical diſquiſitions and inquiries; but make uſe of it to denote rather an *antecedent* or *occaſion* of ſome certain event, than the efficient reaſon of its exiſtence. When they uſe the term Cauſe in its moſt ſtrict ſenſe, as implying *efficiency* in it, and carrying the idea of active influence in the *production* of any event, in the natural world; they ever refer to the Deity, the great firſt cauſe, whoſe conſtant efficiency and operation ſupport all nature, and, agreeable to certain eſtabliſhed rules and laws, by a conſtant efficiency and power produce that ſeries of events which we conſtantly behold in the material world.

So, when we are inquiring into the *cauſe* of *moral events*; if we uſe the term in ſo limited a ſenſe as to include only the idea of *productive influence and efficiency*, it will be quite prepoſterous and inſignificant to bring motives at all into view, or make any mention of them; it being moſt obvious and plain, that they are not the *cauſes* of volition. When we are inquiring

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into the *ſources* of things, and the *cauſe* of their exiſtence; as in the natural, ſo in the moral world, we are compelled to reſolve all into the divine diſpoſal, and a certain law, or method, of conſtant divine agency and operation.* What are uſually termed *ſecondary cauſes*, have no productive efficiency and energy in them. And when we ſpeak of things, in the natural world, as *acting* on each other, we uſe the term in an indirect and figurative ſenſe; not ſuppoſing that there is any *action*, in the moſt ſtrict ſenſe, any where but in one who is properly *an agent*, and who *exerts influence*, and *putteth forth efficiency*, for the production of ſome event. To repreſent motives as the *cauſes* of volition, in the ſtrict and proper ſenſe of the term, would be at once to inveſt them with agency, and make them moral beings. When, therefore, we conſider motives as the cauſes of acts of the will, the idea of active energy and efficiency muſt be carefully excluded from the expreſſion; otherwiſe it will betray us into manifeſt error and confuſion.

Whenever the will is ſaid to be *governed* by motives, and motives are repreſented as the *cauſe* of volition; the word cauſe, it muſt be carefully remembered, implieth nothing more than an *occaſion* of the event; or, ſomething eſſential to the event, and without which it could not be what it is. In this ſenſe motives may be ſaid to be the cauſes of volition, and the will to be under the government of motives. Thus, ſomething in ſnow, which occaſions that particular appearance, is the *cauſe* of its whiteneſs; and the roundneſs and ſmoothneſs of its particles, the *cauſe* of the fluidity of water. It is very manifeſt that the word Cauſe, in theſe inſtances, denoteth nothing of

* Dr. Taylor ſeemeth to be of this opinion, when he ſaith, "I do not know "that we derive any thing at all from Adam, *but by the will and operation of* "*God*—no more than the *acorn* deriveth from the *oak*. It is, I judge, a great "though common fallacy, to ſuppoſe that ſomething is infuſed into the human "nature, abſolutely independent of ourſelves, and *not from the will of God.*" (See Scrip. Doc. &c. p. 187.) And again, "No changes can happen in our "conſtitution, without either *the appointment, or immediate* operation, of God." p. 191.

efficiency; but only ſomething *eſſential to* the whiteneſs of ſnow, and the fluidity of water.

In a ſenſe analogous to this, the *agreeable appearance* of any thing may be ſaid to be the *cauſe* of our chooſing it; and the perception of ſomething *diſagreeable*, the *cauſe* of our diſlike and averſion. And thus the will may be ſaid to be *as the greateſt apparent good is*; juſt as the fluidity of water may be ſaid to be *as the ſmoothneſs and roundneſs of its particles are*; or, the ſolidity and hardneſs of any thing, *as the cloſeneſs, coheſion or fixedneſs of its parts*. But to ſay, that agreeable and diſagreeable appearances are the *efficient* reaſon and cauſe of volition, would be as far from being true, as that the ſmoothneſs and rotundity of the particles of water have efficiency in them to *produce* fluidity and fluctuation; or, that nearneſs and fixedneſs of parts have efficiency to produce ſolidity and hardneſs as their *effect*. An agreeable appearance to the mind, is no more diſtinct from choice, than a fixedneſs and coheſion of parts is diſtinct from ſolidity. Agreeable and diſagreeable appearances and perceptions are eſſential ingredients in choice and averſion. Nothing is ever choſen, otherwiſe than as being agreeable; or refuſed, otherwiſe than as being diſagreeable. This being the caſe, we have accuſtomed ourſelves to ſpeak of an agreeable appearance, as the *cauſe* of choice; and a diſagreeable appearance, as the *cauſe* of averſion.

2. When we ſpeak of the *determination of the will*, there is equal need of care and caution that we do not bring into view the idea of productive, cauſal efficiency and influence. That may be ſaid to determine the will, which is the occaſion, or reaſon, of its being as it is and not otherwiſe. The will is determined by motive, as ſight is determined by object, and hearing by ſound. Thus, the paper before me *determines* my ſight; and the ſound which now ſaluteth my ears, my hearing. Yet that particular perception, or ſight, which I have when I look upon the paper before me, is not, properly ſpeaking, *cauſed* by the *perception* of

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this object, or its ſenſibly ſtriking my eye ; nor is my hearing *cauſed* by the ſound which ſaluteth me : and yet my preſent ſight may properly be ſaid to be determined by the paper before me ; and my hearing, by the ſound which ſtrikes and ſalutes me. In a ſenſe ſimilar to this, volition may be ſaid to be *excited* by motive, and the will *determined* by it.

It may, alſo, agreeable to the ſenſe in which the term is frequently uſed, be properly ſaid, that motives have *influence* in determining the will. In complex objects, every ſimple idea hath *influence* in determining their nature. In mixt colours every ingredient hath influence in determining the ſhade. Yet every ſimple, of which the compound is made, hath its influence only in being blended with the others, and, as it were, by incorporating with them. So motives have *influence* in *determining* the will ; and yet they have no influence any otherwiſe than *in being perceived :* for it is in *their being perceived* that they *determine* volition to be as it is, and not otherwiſe. This, I think, muſt be the ſenſe in which *motives* may be ſaid to have *influence* in *determining* the will.

3. Motives may be ſaid, in ſome ſenſe, to have a *tendency* to excite volition, and engage affection. But whenever this is affirmed of *motives*, the term muſt be uſed only for external object : for nothing is more manifeſt, than that motives (external objects) have no degree of *active* efficiency and influence upon the mind to *produce* volition ; nor *any* influence, otherwiſe than in being perceived. The will feels the tendency of a motive to engage its choice, *in actual chooſing ;* as bodies feel (if I may ſo ſay) their mutual tendency to each other, only in being attracted and drawn. There is a foundation, in the nature of things, or in the law of divine operation, for all material things to unite with one another. This foundation for this natural union, we call *tendency*. This tendency is in every atom in the whole ſyſtem. Yet we may conceive two different atoms placed at ſuch an almoſt infinite diſtance,

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the one from the other, as to have no degree of perceptible, diſcernible influence, upon each other. And though in their preſent ſituation, and remote diſtance from each other, no ſenſible effect of this tendency to each other appeareth; there is, nevertheleſs, the ſame foundation in theſe atoms, or minute particles of matter, for producing diſcernible effects upon one another, upon their being brought within the ſphere of each other's attraction, as there is in any two particles of matter in the ſyſtem, however nearly placed the one to the other. This adaptedneſs in material things to produce effects upon each other, is commonly termed *tendency;* though it is nothing more, ſtrictly ſpeaking, than the foundation there is, in a certain law of conſtant, divine operation, for the taking place and coming into exiſtence of ſuch particular events and effects.

So, alſo, it may with equal propriety be obſerved of any particular kind of *food* or *fruit* which we never taſted, or ſaw—that it is impoſſible it ſhould have any influence in pleaſing the palate, or gratifying the appetite, otherwiſe than *in being actually taſted and reliſhed.* The ſavour of food, or fruit, can have no influence in determining our love to it, otherwiſe than *in being perceived:* for, *in perceiving* the taſte or ſavour of food or fruit, *is* all the love or hatred to either, which ever taketh place. But, this notwithſtanding, there is ſomething in the nature of certain kinds of food and fruit—ſomething in the ſhape, ſize, ſmoothneſs or roughneſs and arrangement of the parts, or in the tone of the ſtomach, or texture of the palate—which lays a foundation for our *reliſhing* the food, or fruit, as ſoon as they are taſted, and the ſavour of them is known. The foundation there is in the nature of things, under certain circumſtances, for this effect, is what I mean to expreſs by the word Tendency, as I here uſe the term.

This tendency may be predicated with equal propriety, both of the palate, and of the food, or fruit.

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There is no more tendency in the food, or fruit, to pleaſe the palate, than there is in the palate to *be pleaſed* with the food, or fruit: as there is no more tendency in the earth to attract the bodies which ſurround it, than there is in ſurrounding bodies to *be attracted* by it.

Theſe obſervations may ſerve to illuſtrate the meaning of the term Tendency, when applied to *motives* in their relation to volition, and previous to any perception the mind hath of them. No tendency of motives to volition is perceived and felt, otherwiſe than in the actual taking place and exertion of choice. Yet there is a foundation in the nature of things, ariſing from ſome certain quality in objects, and from the particular ſtate, temper and complexion of the mind, for their being *choſen* whenever they ſhall be known and perceived, and as ſoon as they ſhall come into the view of the mind. Or, to ſpeak more agreeably to ſtrict, philoſophic truth; it is agreeable to the conſtitution of God, and the law of conſtant divine operation, that ſuch particular effects ſhould invariably take place under ſuch certain circumſtances, and come into exiſtence in ſuch a particular ſeries, connexion and order. This foundation which there is in motives for engaging the choice and election of the mind, or in the mind itſelf for having its choice and election *engaged* by ſuch objects, is what we often mean to expreſs by the term TENDENCY, as applied both to the mind itſelf, and to motives—external objects.

In this ſenſe only muſt the word be uſed, when we ſay there is a *tendency* in motives to *excite* volition; or, a *tendency* in the mind to have volition *excited* by motives. There is no other tendency than this in motives, *while unperceived*, to excite the will to motion and action: and to affirm any other, will not comport with the ſtrict truth of things. But ſuch a tendency as this, in motives, to volition, and in the will to be *influenced* by motives, may doubtleſs be with truth affirmed. And ſo ſtrong and inſuperable are

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theſe mutual tendencies of motives, and the will of moral beings, to each other ; and ſo inſeparable the connexion between the influence of the former, and the exertions of the latter ; that no object, with qualities ſuited to the ſtate, temper and diſpoſition of the mind, ever cometh into *its* view without being actually choſen. Such an object is no ſooner apprehended and perceived by the mind, than it is reliſhed and choſen. And ſuch was the antecedent ſtate and diſpoſition of the mind, and ſuch the adaptedneſs of the object with its qualities to that particular ſtate and temper of mind, as to lay a foundation for choice, and be a ground of the certainty of it, whenever the object ſhall come within the view of the mind.

Theſe obſervations may ſerve to ſhew, in what ſenſe the human will may be ſaid to be *governed* and *determined* by *motives*, and how the exertions of it are under *their* influence. And it from hence appeareth, that motives are never to have cauſal influence and efficiency attributed to them ; nor to be conſidered as *cauſes* in any other view than as being *eſſential* to the exerciſes of human will and affection. If theſe things were properly conſidered, and kept in view, I am humbly of opinion, that we ſhould not find the appearance of ſuch inconſiſtency and abſurdity in what Mr. Edwards hath ſaid upon the nature and influence of motives in determining the volitions of moral agents, as the Author of the Examination of his Inquiry on Freedom of Will, would perſuade the public to believe may be faſtened upon him.

It is often ſaid, that the brute creation are governed by *inſtinct ;* mankind—rational, moral agents—by *motives*. By theſe expreſſions, as in common uſe among men, we mean no more than to diſtinguiſh the different cauſes of the *outward actions* of men, from thoſe of the beaſts. We are greatly in the dark as to the particular law of operation, under the influence of which the actions of the brutal part of our world take place. But finding it very diſtinguiſhable from that under the

operation

operation and influence of which trees and plants thrive and flouriſh, and apparently of a nature far ſuperior to it; and yet much inferior to the moral habits of mankind; we have given it the name of *inſtinct*, without affixing any very diſtinct, determinate ideas to the term. However, we can certainly mean nothing more by it, than, in general, that law of operation, under the influence of which the motions we behold in them take place.

When we ſpeak of the laws of *our* nature, we are under better advantages for affixing diſtinct, determinate ideas to the expreſſion. Here we have our own feelings and perceptions to guide our inquiries. When we ſay, that moral, intelligent beings are governed by *motives*; meaning by the expreſſion to intimate the law of *their* nature, under the influence of which their *actions*—what is viſible to others—take place; we have the concurring ſenſe and univerſal feelings of mankind, to illuſtrate and give ſignificancy to the expreſſion. When we ſay, that rational beings are governed by motives, and their *actions* are the fruit of their influence; the moſt natural and obvious meaning of the expreſſion is, that their conduct, their actions, are the fruit of voluntary choice and deſign. The conduct and actions of beaſts are the fruit of a certain law of their natures, which we term inſtinct: the conduct of men, the fruit of free, voluntary election. But, that this voluntary deſign and choice, which are the cauſe and ground of outward action, are themſelves alſo the effect of voluntary deſign and choice; that the free, voluntary election of the mind, from whence outward actions proceed, are themſelves alſo the effect of the free, voluntary election of *the ſame mind*; is what never entereth the thoughts of the vulgar; being a refinement upon metaphyſics and common ſenſe, for which we are indebted to that uncommon freedom of thought and inquiry, which hath greatly prevailed in theſe latter ages of the world.

When we ſay, that mankind *are governed by motives*;

the original, natural meaning of the expreſſion is, that their (outward) conduct is under the influence of free, voluntary deſign, and the fruit of it. But it no more leads us to apprehend, that this intelligent, voluntary deſign is itſelf the fruit and effect of voluntary deſign *in the ſame being*, than the expreſſion, that the wheels of a watch are under the government of ſprings, leadeth us to imagine that the elaſtic power of the ſpring, which acteth immediately upon the wheels, is alſo the effect of ſome *other* elaſtic power and force.

In judging of the moral quality of actions, mankind never carry their inquiries farther back than to the internal, voluntary deſign of the agent. When this is formed, we have all the ground to form a judgment upon, that is ever deſired. Mankind evidently ſtand in need of ſome mark, or period, within which to bound and limit their inquiries into the morality of actions. The univerſal ſenſe of men hath marked *intelligent deſign*—free, voluntary election—as this period; being the utmoſt limit of all reaſonable inquiry after *cauſe*, in order to determine the *characters* of men, and the *morality* of actions.

When, therefore, we ſay, that intelligent, moral beings are governed by motives; we uſually mean to diſtinguiſh the next immediate cauſe of *human actions*, from the cauſe of other viſible effects which take place in the inferior works of creation—the natural world. The expreſſion importeth, that the former are the fruit of choice—of free, voluntary deſign; but that the latter ariſe out of ſome certain law of divine operation, without *any deſign whatever*, or any intention any where, except in him who eſtabliſhed ſuch a law of operation, and gave energy and efficiency to it.

Theſe obſervations, I am humbly of opinion, make it manifeſt, that the inquiry concerning motives, according to the uſe of the term in common language, never carrieth the mind farther back than to the *nature* of volitions—the real voluntary deſign and purpoſe of the heart. What is the ground and *efficient*

cauſe

cauſe of volition, is a ſubject which falleth under an entirely different head of inquiry. What the *cauſe* of volition is, may, perhaps, be a ſubject worthy of attention, and fit to employ the talents of inquiſitive, contemplative minds: but this is a ſubject which by no means belongeth to the inquiry concerning moral liberty and agency, which has ſo long engaged the geniuſes and pens both of the advocates for, and oppoſers of, the free, ſovereign and glorious grace of God.

SECT. IV.

Wherein Virtue and Vice are ſhown to conſiſt in the Nature *of the internal diſpoſitions and inclinations of men, in diſtinction from their* Cauſe.

IT is a ſentiment very obnoxious to many, that the eſſence of virtue and vice conſiſteth in the *nature* of diſpoſitions and inclinations, and not in their *cauſe*. The Author of the Examination of the late Preſident Edwards's Inquiry, &c. appears to be particularly diſſatisfied with it; and treats Mr. Edwards's argument upon this ſubject with contempt. He ſpeaks of it as matter of ſurpriſe to him, to find a Gentleman of Mr. Edwards's abilities "uſing ſo weak an argument, deſ-"cending to ſo thin a ſubtilty as this, that the eſſence "of virtue and vice is not in their *cauſe*, but in their "*nature*." (p. 50.) And ſaith, that "nothing can be "more futile than the evaſion, that the eſſence of vir-"tue and vice lies in the *nature* of volition." (p. 66.) It might have been expected of a Gentleman of penetration and diſcernment, that he would have expoſed the *ſubtil ſophiſtry* of Mr. Edwards's argument on this ſubject, and removed the *thin veil* which covereth it, that it might appear in its own native *weakneſs* and *futility*. But the Ex——r, as it appears to me, hath made uſe of no argument to confute this poſition of Mr. Edwards, but what that Author had ſufficiently

and refuted in that ſection wherein he particularly handleth the ſubject.

But whether it be an opinion agreeable to reaſon and common ſenſe, that the virtue and vice of man's internal diſpoſitions and inclinations conſiſt in the *nature* of thoſe diſpoſitions and inclinations themſelves, in diſtinction from their *cauſe*, I propoſe to make the ſubject of particular and careful examination, in the preſent ſection.

And "as no authority can be of equal weight to" eſtabliſh "this poſition as the Author's own, we beg "the Reader would conſider the following paſſages; "which are ſo full to our purpoſe, that we are ſaved "the trouble" of ſo long and laboured a proof of the point, as might otherwiſe be thought neceſſary. He tells us (p. 31.) that "all moral good, or evil, con-"ſiſts in the DISPOSITION or STATE of the mind, or "will." He ſaith, and foundeth an argument upon it, (p. 46.) "that wickedneſs lies in the STATE of the "will." And in p. 49, he ſpeaks of acts of the will as ODIOUS "IN THEIR OWN NATURE." In p. 96, our Author placeth wickedneſs in the perſon's DESIGN and INTENTION. And in the following page ſpeaks of *a willing or unwilling mind, as the object of approbation, or the contrary*. And, more than all this, our Author ſays, (p. 65.) "For he (Mr. Edwards) *very* "*juſtly* obſerves, that the ESSENCE of *all moral good* "or *evil lies in the internal inclinations, diſpoſitions,* "*volitions*." And lower down, on the ſame page, "That vice and virtue lie in the *ſtate* or *frame* of the "ſoul, *and in this only*." What could he have ſaid more direct and full to the preſent caſe? If *all* moral evil conſiſteth in the *diſpoſition* or *ſtate of the mind or will*; then *none of it* conſiſteth in the *cauſe* of the diſpoſition, or ſtate of the mind. And, if acts of the will are *odious in their own nature*; the odiouſneſs of acts of the will doth not lie in their *cauſe*. If wickedneſs lies in the *ſtate* of "the will," it doth not lie in the *cauſe* of this ſtate. And if it is *with juſtice* that

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Mr. Edwards obſerves, that the *eſſence* of *all moral good and evil* lies in the internal inclinations, &c. then the eſſence of *none of it* lieth in their cauſe. Upon theſe principles there is nothing more manifeſt, than that virtue and vice conſiſt in the *nature* of the diſpoſitions and inclinations of men, in diſtinction from their *cauſe*. But, if it were only allowed, that *ſome degree* of virtue, or vice, is to be found in the *volitions* of men, conſidered as abſtracted from their *cauſe*; this would ſufficiently prove, that virtue and vice are not *inconſiſtent* with a certain, infallible connexion in things; and, that it is by no means eſſential to the ideas of virtue and vice, that they ſhould be utterly unconnected with all antecedent ground, reaſon or cauſe of their exiſtence. But it is not only allowed, by our Author, that there may be *ſome degree* of virtue and vice in voluntary exerciſes themſelves; but it is inſiſted, that this is the very ſeat of virtue and vice; *acts* of the will being *odious in their own nature*; and that "*all* moral good and evil conſiſt in the diſpo-
"ſition or ſtate of the mind, or will." In this full and expreſs manner doth our Author give his opinion in favour of the argument under conſideration; though in Mr. Edwards he ſtyleth it "a thin ſubtilty, a futile evaſion."

There are other things in our Author, which, by fair deduction, inconteſtibly prove the point under conſideration; and do moſt certainly ſhew, that the eſſence of virtue and vice is not in their *cauſe*, but in their *nature*. Yea, the leading ſentiments of his whole book—the principal point in which all his arguments centre—taketh for granted this very ſentiment, and muſt immediately loſe all ſupport, if this opinion and principle fail. Our Author very ſtrenuouſly contendeth, that a power of *ſelf-determination* in men, and of *originating* motion in themſelves, is eſſential to moral agency and liberty:—that acts of the will muſt be *ſelf-originated*, in order to have moral quality predicable of them. And he ſpeaks of it as being

being moſt unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that "mere effects ſhould be thought virtuous, or vicious, and "not the cauſe that produced them;" or, that the *paſſive* effect could have another "and diſtinct wickedneſs from that of its cauſe." (p. 66.) According to our Author, nothing can be more abſurd and irrational than to ſuppoſe the exerciſes of the will, or voluntary exertions, in men, to be the fruit of any external influence and cauſe, *for this very reaſon*, that ſuch a ſuppoſition would be quite inconſiſtent with the opinion that voluntary exertions are either virtuous, or vicious. To ſuppoſe that they aroſe from the influence of any external cauſe, would, in his view, immediately ſtrip them of all moral quality, and render exerciſes of will unfit ojects of either praiſe or blame. So eſſential is it, in his view, to the virtuouſneſs and viciouſneſs of the exerciſes of the will, that they ſhould be utterly unconnected with antecedent, extrinſic cauſe.

But if theſe things are ſo, can any thing be more abſurd than to ſeek for the eſſence of virtue and vice in their *cauſe?* Our Author inſiſteth, that all virtue and vice conſiſt in the *ſtate* and *diſpoſition* of the mind; and that *acts of will* may be odious in *their own nature:* and not only ſo, but that it is *eſſential* to their being either virtuous or vicious, that they ſhould be of ſuch a peculiar nature as to need the aſſiſtance of no extrinſic cauſe in order to their gaining exiſtence. Can any thing more infallibly and beyond all contradiction prove that the eſſence of virtue and vice doth certainly conſiſt, not in their cauſe, but in their nature? That the virtue and vice of *volitions* ſhould lie in their *cauſe*, is ſo far from being true, *upon our Author's principles*, that it is utterly inconſiſtent with all ideas of their being *either virtuous or vicious*, to ſuppoſe that they have any connexion whatſoever with *any* antecedent cauſe.

If it ſhould be urged, that moral evil and deformity are not properly and directly predicable of *volitions themſelves*,

themſelves, but of *man* exerciſing and putting forth acts of will; this would ſtill ſuppoſe the eſſence of virtue and vice to conſiſt, not in their cauſe, but in their nature. For our Author urgeth, that man, in his voluntary exertions, is not the ſubject of any external influence; and *as to that exertion* which is deemed either virtuous or vicious, is to be conſidered as unconnected with all cauſe. The vice or virtue, therefore, which is predicated of the MAN, in the *exerciſes of his will*, is to be ſought *in the man exerciſing and putting forth* acts of will; and not in any thing which is a *cauſe*, whereof *man exerciſing and putting forth acts of will* is the effect.

But that there can be no reaſon or conſiſtency in placing the virtue and vice of the internal diſpoſitions and inclinations of men in any thing diſtinct from the diſpoſitions or inclinations themſelves, may be farther and ſtill more clearly argued from the following conſiderations.

I. If the virtue and vice of the voluntary exerciſes and internal inclinations of men, do not conſiſt in theſe exerciſes and inclinations themſelves, they do not conſiſt in any thing. Whatever virtue or vice there may be *in other things*, it is not the virtue or vice of the *exerciſes of the will*. If *exerciſes of the will* are virtuous or vicious, *that virtue or vice* muſt not be found *in theſe exerciſes*, and be predicated of them. If there can be found nothing, either virtuous or vicious, in the nature of voluntary exerciſe; it is certain that voluntary exerciſe is improperly made the *ſubject*, of which moral quality, either virtue or vice, is the *predicate*. If virtue and vice are not to be ſought in the things deemed virtuous and vicious, they are, of courſe, not to be ſought in *any thing*. If we muſt ſtill be referred to the *cauſe* of that which appeareth to us to be either beautiful or deformed, it is a plain caſe that we never ſhall come to the *thing itſelf* which is, *in its own nature*, morally beautiful or deformed—and for this very obvious reaſon, viz. That *nothing* is ſo,

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in *its own nature*; but only in *its cauſe*. What can be more obvious than that, upon theſe principles, the diſcovery of the true nature of virtue and vice doth, and ever muſt, flee before the inquirer, as faſt as he can purſue. When he hath carried his inquiries to ever ſo great a length, he is no nearer a diſcovery than when he firſt entered upon the ſubject. Like our own ſhadow, it eſcapeth us as faſt as we can purſue. The grand object of purſuit, however ſeemingly near and within our reach, ſtill eludes our graſp, and ever will; and nothing, on this ſuppoſition, can be more idle and fruitleſs than to make an inquiry like this the object of purſuit.

There is, indeed, a moſt palpable abſurdity and inconſiſtency in repreſenting the quality of any thing to conſiſt, not in the *nature* of the thing itſelf, but in its *cauſe*. To ſpeak of the virtue and vice of *voluntary inclinations* and *exertions*, not as conſiſting in the inclinations and exertions themſelves, but in ſomething elſe quite diſtinct from them, is to talk unintelligibly, and without meaning. How is it poſſible for any one, from ſuch repreſentations as theſe, to determine where virtue or vice is; or to form any manner of idea or conception of any ſuch quality, or know that there ever was, or is, or can be, any ſuch thing? We may with as much propriety ſay, that the colour of a piece of cloth conſiſts in the dyer; or, that the perfume of ointment is in the apothecary. We may as well ſay, that the ſourneſs of grapes conſiſteth in the vine that bore them; or, the putrefaction of a carcaſe, in the air which occaſioned it. I may appeal to any one, whether it is poſſible for us ever to apprehend *his* ideas of *colour* and *perfume*, *who* ſpeaks of them as conſiſting in the dyer and the apothecary; or, of ſourneſs and putrefaction, *who* repreſents them as being in the vine, or in the air which ſurroundeth us. As impoſſible will it be, I may venture to aſſert, ever to get *his* ideas of moral beauty and deformity, and comprehend *his* meaning of the terms, *who* repreſenteth the virtuouſneſs

tuouſneſs and vicioufneſs of *voluntary exertions* and *internal diſpoſitions*, as conſiſting, not in the diſpoſitions themſelves, but in their *cauſe*.

II. To place the eſſence of virtue and vice, not in their *nature*, but in their *cauſe*, excludeth all poſſibility of ſin; and denies it to be conceivable that any ſuch event ſhould ever take place. According to this argument, whatever *hath* a cauſe, cannot be ſinful; for the ſinfulneſs of any thing lieth, not in the nature of it, but in its cauſe. That which *hath not* a cauſe, but is ſelf-exiſtent, cannot be ſinful, for *this* as well as other reaſons, that ſinfulneſs doth not lie in the *nature* of things, but in their *cauſe*. But *this*, by the ſuppoſition, having nothing but its *nature*, or what is to be found *in the nature* of it, predicable of it; it being itſelf without cauſe; can *for this reaſon* have no vice charged to its account. That which is an *effect* cannot be vicious, becauſe the vicioufneſs of any thing is to be charged to its *cauſe*. That which is only a *cauſe*, being in no reſpects the effect of any thing elſe, cannot be ſinful: "For nothing can be more futile than the "evaſion, that the eſſence of virtue and vice conſiſts "in their *nature*, not in their *cauſe*." What can be more manifeſt than that, according to ſuch a method of reaſoning, it is abſolutely impoſſible there ever ſhould be any ſuch thing as ſin.

Beſides: If the evil of ſin lieth in its cauſe, this ſuppoſeth that it *hath a cauſe*; and *that*, ſuch an one as is extrinſic of itſelf. To repreſent the cauſe of volition as ſomething which is contained in volition itſelf, and not extrinſic of it, is utterly to confound *cauſe* and *effect*, and to deſtroy that relative diſtinction which really ſubſiſteth between them. Therefore, I ſay, to ſpeak of the evil of volition as lying in its cauſe, ſuppoſeth that it hath a cauſe out of itſelf; and that it came into exiſtence by the influence and operation of that cauſe. On this hypotheſis, therefore, I would inquire, where we are to find the evil of the *firſt ſin* that ever took place? by the ſuppoſition the *firſt ſin* had a

cauſe, and that ſuch an one as *was out of itſelf*. Yet this *cauſe* of the *firſt ſin* could not be ſinful: this would be a contradiction in terms. Nor could its *effect* be ſinful, becauſe it did not proceed from a *ſinful cauſe*: —a conſideration eſſential to the evil of any thing, in the view of thoſe Gentlemen who are advocates for that notion of Freedom which I mean to oppoſe. According to their definitions, neither *cauſe* nor *effect* could poſſibly be ſinful. Yet, it being an inconteſtible fact, that there was a *firſt ſin*; and, according to theſe Gentlemen, it being eſſential to the very *being* of it, that it ſhould ariſe out of *ſome cauſe*; how can it be but that it aroſe out of the great FIRST CAUSE, and from his energy and efficiency?

Thus do their notions, that the evil of ſin ariſeth altogether from its *cauſe* and conſiſteth in *the cauſe*, as neceſſarily and palpably make God the author and efficient cauſe of ſin, as any of thoſe obnoxious doctrines that were ever advanced by the moſt rigid fataliſt that ever wrote.

When our Author termeth Mr. Edwards's obſervation, that "the eſſence of virtue and vice is in their *nature*, not in their cauſe," *a weak argument, thin ſubtilty*, &c. I am at a loſs to know whether he meaneth, in reference to the *truth* of the propoſition, or the *pertinency* of it to *his* general argument. If the Ex—r ſpeaks in reference to the *truth* of the obſervation, when he calleth it "a weak argument, thin ſubtilty," &c. he ought, at leaſt, to have taken ſome notice of the reaſons upon which Mr. Edwards groundeth his aſſertion. But ſince he hath not, the critical reader will perhaps think that *he*, not Mr. Edwards, uſeth *weak arguments*, *deſcendeth to thin ſubtilties*. So far is he from juſtifying his oppoſition to Mr. Edwards in this point, that he hath, repeatedly, fully and expreſsly, aſſerted the ſame thing; as I have already ſhown.

If our Author treats this argument of Mr. Edwards's with contempt, becauſe he imagines it *impertinent* to that Author's general argument, I cannot think that he doth it juſtice.

When

When it is urged by Objectors, that it is inconſiſtent with the virtuouſneſs, or viciouſneſs, of internal diſpoſitions and inclinations, to ſuppoſe that they ſhould proceed from ſome antecedent cauſe with which their exiſtence was connected; and, that the connexion of volition with any antecedent cauſe, ground, or reaſon, of its exiſtence, is inconſiſtent with all ideas of its having moral quality, either virtue or vice, predicable of it: when, I ſay, ſuch an objection as this is urged againſt that infallible certainty and connexion in things, which Mr. Edwards was endeavoring to illuſtrate and prove; could any thing be more natural, more pertinent to his argument, than to ſhew that the virtue and vice of volitions conſiſt, not in the *cauſe* or *antecedent ground* of theſe volitions, but in the *nature* of them? Every impartial reader muſt ſee that *ſuch a reply*, to *ſuch an objection*, could not be impertinent. I cannot but think that the Ex—r himſelf, upon a review of the matter, will be convinced that he hath not herein done juſtice to Mr. Edwards.

But let us attend to our Author's reaſoning and objections on this head, and ſee if there is any weight in them.

He urgeth (p. 66.) that there is as much reaſon to ſuppoſe that *volitions* partake of moral good and evil, with reference *only* to their cauſe; as that mere bodily, outward actions ſhould be eſteemed, either morally good or evil, *only* in relation to *their* cauſe. Theſe are not juſt his own words; but, as far as I can judge, contain the true ſenſe of his argument. In reply to it, I would obſerve,

1. That outward actions and bodily motions are never, themſelves, eſteemed to be, either virtuous, or vicious. The E—r's argument is founded on a ſuppoſition, that *outward actions*, as well as the internal diſpoſitions from whence they proceed, are morally virtuous or vicious: that, over and above the moral virtue and vice there are in the internal exerciſes and diſpoſitions, there is ſomething properly worthy of

eſteem or diſapprobation, in thoſe *outward actions* which are their fruits and effects. On any other ſuppoſition it muſt appear impertinent to aſk, as he doth, on the laſt cited page, "Why outward acts are declared virtuous or vicious only with reference to their cauſe, while this is denied of volition?" Whereas the truth is, that outward actions are not declared virtuous or vicious *at all*, in a direct ſenſe; but are conſidered merely as fruits and indications of ſomething which is, in the proper ſenſe, virtue or vice. We have no proper *indices* of the moral characters of men, beſide their *outward actions*. And as it is by theſe alone that we form our judgment of men, we have accuſtomed ourſelves to ſpeak of outward actions as being morally good, or bad; when, at the ſame time, we mean to conſider them only as marks of moral qualities, which in a direct ſenſe are either virtuous or vicious. But this ſubject hath been very accurately and particularly handled by Mr. Edwards himſelf, in that ſection of his book which he wrote expreſsly upon the ſentiment under conſideration. And I do not ſee how our Author could expect any weight to be laid upon *his own arguments*, until he had fairly anſwered what Mr. Edwards had ſaid in defence of *his*.

2. This being the caſe of *outward actions*—whatever is viſible to men, we are neceſſitated, when we are examining for moral beauty or deformity, to look back to *their cauſe*—ſomething not obvious to our ſenſes. But if it was a dictate of natural reaſon, that there is any degree of moral good or evil, beauty or deformity, *in the outward actions themſelves*; we ſhould have no occaſion to inquire into the cauſe of even *outward actions*, or bring it at all into view, in forming our opinion of the virtuouſneſs or vicioufneſs of them. If outward actions were as truly of a moral nature, as internal exerciſes; there would be no more reaſon in examining the *cauſe* of the former, than of the latter, in order to determine the *quality* of them.

In order to determine the moral evil of *volitions*, we never

never need make any inquiry concerning their cauſe. If the evil of the *cauſe* is ſought, it will be then neceſſary to examine the cauſe. But in order to judge of the evil of the *effect*, nothing beſide the effect need come under our obſervation. To ſay that we cannot judge of the moral evil of volition, without knowing and being acquainted with its cauſe, is as perfectly abſurd as to ſay that we cannot judge of the ſhape and ſitting of a garment without knowing the taylor who made it; or, of the beauty of a piece of embroidery, without knowing the lady who wrought it.

Our Author (in p. 50.) attempts to confute Mr. Edwards out of his own mouth. In order to it, he quotes what that Author ſays to prove that all events which come into exiſtence have an anſwerable cauſe, and that their exiſtence is certainly connected with their cauſe. In treating this argument, Mr. Edwards had ſaid (p. 62. edit. 3.) that "there cannot be more in the effect, than in the cauſe." His meaning evidently is, that every cauſe is adequate to the *production* of whatever appeareth in its effect; and that, in this ſenſe, there cannot be more in the effect, than there is in its cauſe:—That, as it is a dictate of common ſenſe, that no event can come into exiſtence without a cauſe; ſo it is equally a dictate of the ſame common ſenſe of men, that every event, or effect, muſt ariſe from a cauſe which hath a ſufficiency in it for the production of that effect of which it is the cauſe. But from this poſition it is by no means a conſequence, that *volition* cannot be virtuous or vicious, farther than the cauſe of it is virtuous or vicious.

Mr. Edwards likewiſe hath allowed, that "it may be wickedneſs in the cauſe, that it produces wickedneſs." Our Author inferreth as a conſequence from this conceſſion, "that in every ſinful volition there are two wickedneſſes." But he is certainly here too haſty in his concluſion: becauſe there *may be* a wicked *cauſe* of wickedneſs, it doth not from thence neceſſarily follow, that the cauſe of every wickedneſs is itſelf alſo wicked.

wicked. All good and evil, virtuous and vicious, actions of men, have an occaſion of their coming into exiſtence. Yet we do not commonly argue the goodneſs or badneſs of the occaſion, from the virtue or wickedneſs of the fact; but ſuppoſe that, many times, ſomething truly good and virtuous may be *occaſioned* by that which is evil; and, on the other hand, ſomething bad—morally evil—by that which is *good*: or, that moral good, or evil, may be *occaſioned* by that which is neither evil, nor good.

Our Author takes it for granted, that effects and cauſes have ſuch a relation to one another, and that there is ſo near and intimate an union ſubſiſting between them, as that they muſt neceſſarily participate of the moral qualities of each other. On the ſtrength of this ſuppoſition he very peremptorily cenſureth Mr. Edwards for maintaining this poſition, "That all virtue and vice conſiſt in the *nature*, not the *cauſe* of things;" and treats his argument as being contemptible and weak. Whereas, in truth, a wicked effect is no more a proof of a wicked or ſinful cauſe, than a neceſſary effect is a proof that its cauſe is neceſſary. It is no more certain, in the nature of things, that the effect which is the production of a *virtuous cauſe*, will alſo be itſelf *virtuous*; than that the effect which is the production of a *voluntary cauſe*, will be alſo itſelf *voluntary*. This is the reaſoning of one whom our Author (p. 48. marg.) quotes with approbation. If he had kept it in view until he had got two pages forward, it might have ſaved him the trouble of ſeveral things which he hath there been at the pains of writing.

Upon the whole, I think it muſt very manifeſtly appear to every careful, attentive inquirer, that all the virtue and vice of the internal diſpoſitions and inclinations of men, is, and muſt of neceſſity be, ſought for and found, in the diſpoſitions and inclinations themſelves; and that nothing can be more abſurd and unintelligible than to repreſent the quality of any thing, not as being in the thing itſelf, of which it is a quality,

but

but in ſomething elſe entirely diſtinct from it. According to thoſe rules of reaſoning, whereby the ſinfulneſs of volitions is made to conſiſt in their cauſe, any man may be ſafely challenged to give an intelligible definition of ſinfulneſs, or convey any idea of the thing, or ſhew the leaſt poſſibility of its exiſtence.

If there is any ſuch thing as ſinfulneſs, it muſt be in the thing which is ſinful: the eſſence of it muſt be in the thing itſelf, not in its cauſe; as much as warmth and brightneſs are in the beams of the ſun, in diſtinction from that which is the *cauſe* of ther being emitted and ſent down hither upon our world. And if this is true, no appearance of argument can be drawn from the conſideration that there is *moral quality*—virtue or vice—in the voluntary exertions of the minds of men, againſt a certain, infallible connexion in things, and the doctrine which maketh human volitions the *effect* of ſome external influence, or extrinſic cauſe.

Becauſe the ſun is luminous and warm, it would be very ridiculous to reaſon, that therefore the cauſe of the exiſtence of that warm and luminous body is alſo itſelf warm and luminous. Equally abſurd and ridiculous would it be to urge, that becauſe there is ſuch a thing in fact as ſinful exiſtence, therefore the cauſe of that exiſtence muſt likewiſe be itſelf ſinful: and ſtill more ridiculous, if poſſible, ſo ſtrenuouſly to hold to the opinion, that there is ſuch a kind of connexion between cauſes (what may in the moſt ſtrict and proper ſenſe be ſo termed) and their effects, as that they *neceſſarily* partake of the *qualities* of each other, as to be driven to the hard neceſſity of ſuppoſing every thing which is ſinful to be ſelf-originated, ſelf-exiſtent.

However fit a ſubject the inquiry into the *cauſe* of human volitions may be to employ the talents of contemplative, inquiſitive men, it is, however, a ſubject quite foreign from the preſent controverſy; having no particular relation to it, or connexion with it. The way therefore is open, notwithſtanding any objections of this kind, for a direct proof of an eſtabliſhed, infal-

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lible certainty in things; and for ſhewing a fixed connexion between antecedents and conſequents, cauſes and effects. However intricate and perplexing the argument may be in other reſpects, it is quite unembarraſſed in *this*: it can no longer juſtly be harraſſed with the objection of its being inconſiſtent with all our ideas of virtue and vice.

Why it ſhould be thought to be ſo inconſiſtent with truth and reaſon, that men ſhould be praiſed or blamed for their own free, voluntary exertions, even though the operation and influence of ſome cauſe, extrinſic of themſelves, were neceſſary to the taking place of theſe volitions, and their coming into exiſtence, is difficult for me to conceive; unleſs it be, that the neceſſity and concurrence of ſuch a cauſe, to the taking place of the volitions of men, are inconſiſtent with thoſe ideas of the ſufficiency, and boaſted independency, of men, which diſtinguiſh and degrade the human race. Nothing is more humbling to the pride of human nature than the thought of being held in a ſtate of abſolute dependence on the ſovereign will of Him in whoſe hand our lives are, and whoſe are all our ways. To be faſt bound under his power, and chained down in a ſtate of the moſt perfect, entire dependence on the ſovereign pleaſure of ſome ſuperior, inviſible Agent, is a thought ſpurned at by the proud and haughty ſpirit; and is moſt abhorrent from thoſe ideas of ſelf-ſufficiency and importance, which, to the eternal diſgrace of the ſpecies, are cheriſhed in the hearts of men.

SECT. V.

In which is inquired, Whether there is not an antecedent certainty of the exiſtence of every event which ever comes into being?

A CERTAIN, eſtabliſhed connexion between cauſes and their effects, and the infallible antecedent certainty

certainty of all events which ever come into exiſtence, is an argument which hath been handled by Mr. Edwards with ſuch peculiar ſtrength and perſpicuity, in that very inquiry which our Author hath undertaken to examine; that, until *his* reaſonings in ſupport of the opinion of ſuch a connexion in things are obviated and refuted by the advocates for ſuch a liberty and freedom in human nature as is inconſiſtent with an abſolute previous certainty of all events, it ſeemeth almoſt impertinent to offer any thing farther upon the ſubject. Propriety, however, will hardly admit of its being paſſed over in ſilence. I would therefore, in this ſection, briefly ſuggeſt a few arguments in ſupport of this opinion.

I. That it ſhould be ſo, and that there is a certain, infallible connexion of all events which ever take place, with ſome antecedent cauſe or ground of their exiſtence, is a dictate of natural reaſon, and perfectly agreeable to the common ſenſe and underſtandings of men. Wherever we behold an event, there we infer a cauſe: this ſeems to be one of the firſt dictates of the reaſon of men. There is nothing in which mankind give earlier teſtimonies of reaſoning, than in inferences which they very apparently make from effect to cauſe. And this, indeed, is a firſt principle, and the ground of all our reaſonings—that every *effect* muſt have a *cauſe*; and *that*, ſuch an one as is adequate to it: and that effects are always indiſſolubly connected with their cauſes. If this principle is given up, all the foundation of our reaſoning is deſtroyed, and we are left in a ſtate of the utmoſt uncertainty and doubtfulneſs. If this principle is removed, Paul's reaſonings (Rom. 1. 20.) in proof of the exiſtence and perfection of one ſupreme GOD, are utterly inconcluſive and falſe. *He* ſays, "The inviſible things of him, from "the creation of the world, are *clearly ſeen, being un-* "*derſtood by the things that are made*, even his eternal "power and Godhead." And yet this concluſion of the Apoſtle's is entirely grounded on the ſuppoſition,

that every effect hath a cauſe ; and, that effects and their cauſes are cloſely and inſeparably connected together. If this is not an undoubted truth, the Apoſtle's reaſonings are unjuſt ; his concluſions precipitant. For the exiſtence and perfection of the Godhead are ſeen and underſtood by the things that are made, only as the *cauſe* is ſeen and underſtood in and by its *effect*. But if there may be an effect without a cauſe, and unconnected with cauſe ; then no cauſe can be certainly ſeen and underſtood by, or in, its effect. If one event may exiſt without any antecedent ground and cauſe, another may alſo : and therefore it will be impoſſible to determine, from effects, which have, and which have not, a cauſe ; which, or whether any at all, are connected with any antecedent cauſe or reaſon of their exiſtence. For if the leaſt conceivable event may exiſt without a cauſe, all ground of faith is at once removed, and all the labour of mankind after knowledge and truth, as to matters of faith, is utterly in vain.

And if this reaſoning (from effect to cauſe) is juſt, when applied to material, inanimate things ; much more ſo is it, when applied to animate, immaterial things. Here the argument ſtrongly concludeth from the leſs, to the greater. If events in the natural world require a cauſe, certainly a cauſe is not leſs neceſſary to the exiſtence of thoſe more important and intereſting events which take place in the moral world. If a *cauſe* may be ſeen in the ſmalleſt event ; much more may it be ſeen in greater and more important ones. And ſurely none can deny, that moral events do as viſibly need to be under the reſtraints and guidance of wiſdom, as natural ones : and it is as much a dictate of reaſon, that it is wiſe and fit that the time, manner, and all the circumſtances, of their exiſtence, ſhould be exactly bounded, limited and preſcribed.

The principle, therefore, of a poſſibility that events ſhould come into exiſtence without the influence of any extrinſic, antecedent cauſe, ſtrikes at the very root of revelation ; taketh away all ground of the credibil-

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ity of it; and at once diveſts it of all its authority to command our belief. If one event may take place without a cauſe, another may: and *it may be* that this grand and beautiful ſyſtem, which our eyes behold, was ſelf-originated and ſelf-made; and that the ſurpriſing ſcene, and regular ſucceſſion of events which have taken place in our world, have ſomehow unaccountably jumbled into exiſtence in ſuch admirable harmony and order, neither under the guidance of wiſdom, nor the influence of cauſe. And thus the denial of this grand principle of knowledge leads immediately to the Epicurean doctrine of CHANCE.

It is as much a dictate of the common underſtandings of men, that there is a connexion of *moral events* with their cauſes, as of *natural*: and upon this ground only is it, that we uſe wiſdom and art in adapting motives to the diſpoſitions of men. Our notions of *habit* and *character*, if ſtrictly examined, will appear to be nothing more than an apprehended connexion of a number and ſeries of mental exerciſes, of the ſame general nature and denomination. It is upon an apprehenſion of ſuch a connexion, that we form any concluſions, or even conjecture, reſpecting the future conduct of particular perſons; and pretend to judge, from what hath already appeared in them, how they will conduct under any given circumſtances, and in any particular ſituation. It is only on ſuppoſition of a connexion between cauſes and effects, as well in the moral as in the natural world, that we ſuppoſe ourſelves to have the leaſt authority to form even a conjecture, concerning the future exiſtence of any one event that can poſſibly be named. On this foundation it is, that all our faith in divine revelation is built; no man, any otherwiſe than on the ſuppoſition of ſuch a connexion, having the leaſt reaſonable ground to hope for the accompliſhment of any one of the promiſes of it.

Nothing can be more certain, than that the accompliſhment of the prophecies of the word of God doth

ſo much depend on the voluntary exerciſes of free agents, and is ſo intimately connected with them, as that without them it is not poſſible that they ſhould ever be accompliſhed and fulfilled. And it is abſurd to ſay, that any event can be more certain than the *means* through which it is to take place; that the accompliſhment of any prophecy can be more certain, than thoſe voluntary exerciſes of intelligent creatures, in which their accompliſhment conſiſteth. But if there is no connexion in things, between cauſes and effects, antecedents and conſequents, beſide what is conſiſtent with that power of *ſelf-determination* in men, and freedom to *either ſide*, which the Ex—r pleads for, as being neceſſary to moral action; it will be utterly impoſſible for any event whatever to become certain *by means of the voluntary exerciſes of men*, in any degree of conſiſtency with the creature's being a fit ſubject of reward or puniſhment, praiſe or blame.

The Ex—r himſelf admits (p. 67, 81, 82.) that every *moral event* muſt have an anſwerable cauſe; but inſiſteth, that it muſt be a *moral cauſe;* and appeals to the common underſtanding of men, whether *intelligent mind* muſt not be *that* cauſe. And as, upon his principles, it cannot be that the Deity ſhould be the cauſe of human volitions; he would hence infer, that mankind —voluntary agents—are the *cauſes* of their own voluntary exertions and actions; and, conſequently, *determine themſelves* (i. e. ſelf-determined) to moral good and evil. Our Author's reaſonings here appear to me to be, as well ſubverſive of his own principles, as inconcluſive in themſelves. For,

1. They admit an infallible connexion between human volitions and *ſome antecedent cauſe*. If every moral event hath an anſwerable cauſe on which it is dependent for its exiſtence; then all moral events come into exiſtence under the *influence* of their ſeveral cauſes—an influence which is *previous* to the event and *extrinſic* of it, and with which the event is certainly connected. Now if moral events ſtand in ſuch a relation to their

cauſes,

cauſes, and are ſo connected with them, it cannot be that the voluntary exerciſes of mankind are *ſelf-originated:* this connexion being as inconſiſtent with a power of ſelf-determination in men, as any doctrine of neceſſity that was ever eſpouſed by Hobbs, Spinoza or Mr. Edwards. Let the *cauſe* of moral events be *intelligent mind*, or what elſe it will, *that* doth not hinder or break that certain connexion in things—between human volitions and *ſome* antecedent cauſe, which entirely ſubverteth that liberty—that freedom to *either ſide*, which, in our Author's view, is eſſential to virtue and vice. If our Author meaneth to account for that moral event called *volition*, by *intelligent mind*, as its cauſe, in order to evade the evidence of a fixt connexion and antecedent certainty of things; his conſequence is certainly exceedingly lame: it hath no *connexion* with his premiſes. To argue againſt an eſtabliſhed connexion in things, and between cauſes and effects, only by reſolving *ſome events* into ſome *certain*, *particular cauſe*, is not to bring a reaſon to which any one can juſtly expect a reply.*

2. Our Author urgeth, that *the* intelligent mind, which is the cauſe of moral events—volitions—muſt be the *human* mind, not the *divine*. But yet *intelligent mind*,

* The connexion of the acts of the will, with ſome antecedent, extrinſic cauſe, is very fully and expreſsly aſſerted by Dr. Whitby, *in his diſcourſe on the five points*, notwithſtanding his ſhowing himſelf ſo ſtrenuous an advocate for a power of ſelf-determination in men. In treating on the influences of the divine ſpirit, in his diſcourſe of *ſufficient and effectual, common and ſpecial grace*, he ſaith (p. 221, 222. edit. 2.) "That it muſt be granted that in raiſing an idea in my brain by the "*Holy Spirit*, and the impreſſion made upon it there, the action is truly *phyſical*: "That in thoſe actions I am *wholly paſſive*—That theſe operations are *irreſiſtible* "in their production." And (p. 303.) that "when evidence is propounded and "diſcerned, the mind doth *neceſſarily* aſſent unto it." Here the reader will obſerve, that, according to the Doctor, we are *wholly paſſive* and *neceſſary* in our aſſent to propoſitions—ſpeculative truth; and that ſuch aſſent ariſeth *altogether* from *extrinſic*, PHYSICAL influence and operation. And this ſame Author aſſerteth (p. 212.) that "what *makes the will chooſe*, is ſomething approved by the *under-*"*ſtanding*, and *conſequently* appearing to the ſoul as good." And ſaith, that "to ſay that evidence propoſed, apprehended and conſidered, is not *ſufficient to* "*make the underſtanding to approve*; or that the greateſt good propoſed, or the "greateſt evil threatened, when equally believed and reflected on, is not *ſufficient* "*to engage the will* to chooſe the good and refuſe the evil, is, in effect, to ſay, "*that which alone doth move the will to chooſe or to refuſe*, is not ſufficient to en-"gage it ſo to do." And all the arguments on that and one or two of the next ſucceeding pages, are calculated and urged to prove a connexion of acts of the will, with ſome antecedent views of the mind.

mind, in his ſenſe of the expreſſion, is itſelf as much an *effect* as any thing elſe ; and ſtandeth in as much need of a cauſe for *its* ſupport, as that *moral event* itſelf, of which intelligent mind is the cauſe. His device, therefore, is quite inſufficient to account for human volitions, in conſiſtency with their being unconnected, in their exiſtence, with any antecedent cauſe. To pretend to account for *one moral* event *by another*, and *that* an event the exiſtence of which is as unaccountable as the other, for the exiſtence of which *this* is brought into view as a reaſon or cauſe ; and *this*, too, in order to evince the poſſibility of the exiſtence of *ſome events*, without connexion with *any* antecedent cauſe ; every critical reader will at once ſee is perfectly inconſiſtent and abſurd.

It is conceded that every moral event muſt have a cauſe. The exerciſes of the human will are the events in queſtion. Our Author appeals to "thoſe who have common underſtanding to judge," whether *intelligent* mind (not the Deity, but the mind itſelf, for the *exerciſe* of which a cauſe is ſought) is not the cauſe. I believe we may ſafely venture to put the deciſion of the queſtion upon the propoſed iſſue.

II. A fixed, unalterable, eſtabliſhed connexion in things ; or a previous infallible certainty of all events which ever did, or will, take place within the whole compaſs of creation ; may be moſt clearly and certainly inferred from the conſtant, abſolute dependence which all things have upon God. Every *cauſe* which exerteth any influence in the whole univerſe, deriveth all its operative power and ſtrength ultimately from God ; and, therefore, in all its exertions, muſt be, in ſome way or other, connected either mediately or immediately with the divine will, and the conſtant exertions of the divine mind. Even admitting that there are ſuch powers of human nature as our Author urgeth (were it, indeed, poſſible to form any manner of idea or conception of them) ſtill for their *being*—their *exiſtence*—they muſt, of neceſſity, be conſtantly dependent

ent on God. It cannot be ſuppoſed, with the leaſt appearance of reaſon, that men, or *any other creatures*, are ſo formed, dignified and endowed, as to be capable of exiſting, and remaining any thing, even the ſpace of a ſingle moment, without divine aids, and ſupports from without, ſo as to render a *poſitive act of power* neceſſary to annihilate and reduce them to their original nothing. And whatever is *altogether* and *entirely* dependent on God for its *exiſtence*, in the whole and every part of it; muſt, of conſequence, be dependent on God for its *exertion*, in the whole and every degree of it:—the exertion being one thing which neceſſarily comes into conſideration in determining the *nature* and *quality* of the exiſtence which is ſupported and upheld.* And if the power inſiſted on, in every degree of its exertion, is dependent on God, the conſequence undeniably is, that its *exertions* are, in ſome way or another, cloſely and inſeparably connected with ſome antecedent cauſe. And if they are connected with ſome antecedent cauſe, nothing is more manifeſt than that there is an antecedent certainty of their exiſtence. Theſe conſequences, to me, it appeareth, cannot be evaded, without denying, not only an *immediate*, but even an ultimate, dependence on God. A *mediate* and *ultimate* dependence as truly giveth a previous, abſolute and infallible certainty to any thing, as an *immediate* dependence. The whole and only difference is, that, *in the one caſe*, the cauſe which determines and giveth certainty to the event, operates through one or a number of *means*, before its genuine tendency and ultimate influence becometh viſible in event: *in the other*, its tendency and influence are *immediately* ſeen; and it doth not operate and extend through *any medium*, to its effect. It is quite unphiloſophical (not to ſay atheiſtical) to ſuffer any number of intervening *media* to obſcure

* This obſervation is undoubtedly juſt, if men have not a power of ſelf-determination or of originating voluntary motion in themſelves. For if men have not this power, they are equally dependent on God for their *exerciſes* as for their *being*—their exiſtence. And for a proof that there are no ſuch powers in men, I beg leave to refer the reader to the next ſection, where this ſubject is particularly conſidered.

obſcure the agency of that divine hand which God is lifting up and making viſible in all his works. And it is very ungrateful and diſreſpectful to the Deity, for us to ſuffer an *eſtabliſhed courſe* of things, or an *operation by means*, to leſſen our ſenſe of dependence on him.

But that a power of ſelf-determination in men, and of beginning motion in themſelves, ſhould be ſpoken of as inconſiſtent with that dependence which creatures neceſſarily have on God, Dr. Clarke, in his demonſtration of the being and attributes of God, and our Author after him (as he quotes him with approbation, p. 93, 94. marg.) thinketh to be only "a childiſh trifling with words." Let us hear the Doctor's more manly reaſoning upon the ſubject. In the firſt place he tells us that "a power of *beginning* motion is not *in itſelf* an impoſſible thing," (a power in a being to begin *his own internal motion* he doubtleſs meaneth, or his obſervation is perfectly impertinent,) "becauſe it muſt of neceſſity be in the ſupreme cauſe." (edit. 8. p. 83.) Hence he concludes, that it *may be communicated* to creatures. The Doctor goes on to obſerve farther, that ſuch a power no more implieth independency, than our powers of perception and conſciouſneſs imply independence on God. He ſays, "In reality it is al-
"together as hard to conceive how conſciouſneſs or
"the power of perception ſhould be communicated to
"a created being, as how a power of ſelf-motion ſhould
"be ſo." (p. 84.) A ſmall degree of reflection, I think, will convince any one that the Doctor's obſervations are neither juſt nor pertinent. For,

1. By what authority doth he ſo peremptorily conclude that this power of beginning motion muſt *neceſſarily* be in the ſupreme cauſe? There is, in truth, no more reaſon to ſuppoſe that ſuch a power exiſteth in the ſupreme, than in ſubordinate, beings. It is, if poſſible, a greater inconſiſtency to ſuppoſe it to be in God, than in men. However, that which is perfectly inconſiſtent and abſurd in itſelf, and is a notion which is, in various ways, ſubverſive of itſelf, can, with no propriety,

propriety, be applied either to the Creator, or to his creature. That which is abſurd and inconſiſtent with itſelf, is ſo, be it where it will; either in the Supreme, or in ſome ſubordinate cauſe.

But if this power is indeed of God, there muſt have been a time, according to the Doctor's own ſtating of the matter, when motion *did begin* in God. To talk of there being a power of *beginning* (internal) *motion* in God, without ſuppoſing that the motion and exerciſe of the divine mind ever did, or in the nature of things might be conceived to, *begin*, I think *we* may be allowed to ſay, is "a childiſh trifling with words." And to ſpeak of the motion and exerciſe of the divine mind as *in fact* ever beginning to exiſt, is *more* than "a childiſh trifling with words;" even an effectual denial of the exiſtence and perfection of God. But doth the Doctor, and the Ex—r after him, who thinks that the Doctor hath argued the poſſibility and reality of ſuch a power "in a clear and *concluſive* manner," imagine the motion—the exerciſe of the divine mind—ever began? Do theſe Gentlemen ſuppoſe that the Deity exiſted for a time, without the leaſt *motion* or thought of heart, or any degree of *exerciſe* of will?—and that then, by his ſovereign *pleaſure* (which, by the way, did not yet exiſt) he brought his own infinite mind ſo *into motion*, as that, in *conſequence* of this motion, it *might be his pleaſure* that motion ſhould *begin?* Certainly ſuch reaſonings as theſe are very unfitly ſtyled "demonſtration of the *being and attributes of God;*" ſince, if there was any truth in them, they would much more fully *demonſtrate* that there is no ſuch being as God, of *any* attributes or perfections. Surely the ſuppoſition of the *poſſibility* of the communication of ſuch a power to the creature, needeth ſome better ſupport than this, in order to gain credit in the world.

In oppoſition to this meaning of the Doctor's, the reader may find that he himſelf aſſerteth (p. 15.) that "whatever exiſts, muſt either have come into being

" out of nothing, abſolutely without a cauſe ; or it
" muſt have been produced by ſome *external* cauſe ;
" or it muſt be ſelf-exiſtent." And farther on the ſame page he ſaith, that for any thing to be *produced by itſelf* is an expreſs contradiction. And on p. 60. he makes uſe of the ſame kind of reaſoning reſpecting external motion, in order to prove the eternal exiſtence of a wiſe, intelligent Cauſe. Yet he conſtantly urgeth *a power of beginning motion* as eſſential to liberty, both in the Creator and the creature. (See p. 73. 77.) How far theſe things are conſiſtent, every reader may judge. It is very manifeſt, that voluntary exertion (the motion in queſtion) whenever it taketh place, is *ſomething which doth exiſt*. According to the Doctor's reaſoning, therefore, it either comes into being without a cauſe ; *or is produced by ſome external cauſe* ; or muſt be ſelf-exiſtent. But that any thing ſhould come into being *without a cauſe*, the Doctor himſelf urgeth, is a plain contradiction. That our voluntary exertions are ſelf-exiſtent, ſo clear a reaſoner as the Doctor will by no means inſiſt ; eſpecially ſince he is ſo careful to vindicate his doctrine of a power of ſelf-motion in men, from the objection, that it implieth independency on God. How then can he conſiſtently ſupport his own principles of a power of ſelf-determination, or of beginning motion in ourſelves, as eſſential to moral liberty and freedom ? And why is it not a plain and manifeſt conſequence of his own reaſonings, that voluntary exertion doth indeed ariſe from ſome *external cauſe?* And beſides, the Doctor expreſsly alloweth an antecedent, abſolute certainty of all events, and that the divine preſcience ſuppoſeth it : (See p. 103, 104.) which is as utterly inconſiſtent with that kind of liberty for which he pleadeth, as any neceſſity reſpecting human volitions which is ever urged by Calviniſtic divines. Nothing, certainly, but a ſtrong attachment to ſome pre-conceived opinion, could have driven ſo clear and excellent a reaſoner as Dr. Clarke, to ſay things ſo evidently abſurd and inconſiſtent with each other !

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2. The Doctor greatly miſtakes us, if he ſuppoſeth that we mean to account for the *manner* of divine operation in communicating *conſciouſneſs*, *perception*, or any thing elſe, to men; and *from thence* argue the inconſiſtency of his communicating to us the powers in queſtion. The *modus* of divine operation, in producing moral being, perception and conſciouſneſs, is what no one, that I know of, pretends to comprehend. But if conſciouſneſs and perception are the fruit of divine efficiency and operation, then *for theſe powers* creatures are dependent on God. The Doctor ſpeaks of a *power of exiſting*, *of being conſcious*, &c. in a manner which as truly implieth *independency*, as that power of *ſelf-motion*, for which he is ſo ſtrenuous an advocate. If by theſe expreſſions he means a power in men, the *fruit* of the exertion and influence of which is their exiſtence or conſciouſneſs, he is very ſafe in concluding that ſuch powers as truly imply independence on God, as it can be ſuppoſed to be implied in a power of ſelf-motion, ſelf-determination. And whenever we concede, that human nature is endowed with ſuch powers, we will then readily admit that the Doctor's "clear and concluſive reaſonings" are quite ſufficient to ſilence all our objections againſt that opinion of a power of ſelf-motion in men, *which ariſe from an apprehenſion of its inconſiſtency with that dependence which all creatures have upon God.*

3. Inſtead of fairly anſwering the objection, therefore, the Doctor only lets us know, that the very ſame objection lieth with equal weight againſt ſome things which *he ſuppoſeth* we receive for truth; and, therefore, that it is unreaſonable *for us* to mention it. The objection againſt *his* opinion, as he himſelf ſtates it, let it be remembered, is, that it implieth ability in men *to act independently from any ſuperior cauſe*. And is not the very thing which he is pleading for, a power in men to *originate* their own internal exerciſes and motions?—even ſo that the *nature* of theſe exerciſes, and the *direction* of theſe motions, ſhall be determined, not

by any *extrinſic*, but wholly by an *intrinſic* cauſe? And doth not this imply, that theſe motions and exerciſes are independent of every thing *extrinſic* of the man whoſe exerciſes they are? Doth not the Doctor's opinion, even by the very terms, imply that there are grounds for the objection which the maintainers of fate (as he is pleaſed to term them) make againſt it, viz. that it implieth an ability in the creature to *act* independently from any ſuperior cauſe? Is it not a power of SELF-MOTION that the Doctor ſo ſtrenuouſly urgeth? And what can *this power* mean, unleſs it be, that for *certain exerciſes and motions* we are dependent only on ourſelves—not on any *foreign*, *extrinſic* cauſe? For us to be independent on any ſuperior cauſe *for our actions*, is to have our *actions* ariſe from no external, ſuperior efficiency, or cauſe. And when our *actions* ariſe from no ſuch efficiency, then we *act independently* of any ſuch efficiency. When our *actions do* ariſe from any external efficiency and influence, then they are not *ſelf-originated*—we are not *ſelf-moved*. For *ſelf-originated motion* to be dependent on *extrinſic cauſe and influence*, for its exiſtence, is a contradiction in terms. When the *action* of the mind doth not ariſe from the influence of any external, ſuperior cauſe; then it certainly *acteth* independently of ſuch cauſe. The *fataliſts*, therefore, will doubtleſs think that there is weight in their objection, until a better and more pertinent anſwer is provided, than the Doctor hath given it.

As to the Doctor's argument from the *feelings*, the experience of mankind, there certainly cannot be much weight in it. He ſays, "We have all the ſame expe-"rience, the ſame marks and evidence, exactly, of our "having really a power of ſelf-motion, as the moſt "rigid fataliſt could poſſible contrive to require, if he "was to make the *ſuppoſition* of a man's being endued "with that power." (p. 85.) This is a bare aſſertion as to matter of fact. And the advocates for *certain connexion*, to be ſure Mr. Edwards and his followers,

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as confidently aſſert, that "all their *feelings*, their *experience*, their perception and conſciouſneſs, are but preciſely ſuch as are perfectly conſiſtent with that eſtabliſhed connexion and previous certainty of things, for the belief of which they have had the opprobrious name of *fataliſts* ſo liberally beſtowed upon them." Juſt as much weight as is laid upon the one of theſe arguments or aſſertions, muſt alſo be allowed the other; by which means they will exactly counterbalance and deſtroy each other.

III. That there is a previous certainty of all events —a certain, infallible connexion in things—is abundantly manifeſt from the doctrine of the fore-knowledge of God. That there is ſuch a fore-knowledge of God, even of the volitions of men, the moſt hidden, ſecret volitions and exerciſes of their thoughts and hearts, is very clearly evident from the word of God, as well as from the conſtant conformity of Divine Providence, in all ages, to the view and repreſentation of things given in his holy word. And ſince God's certain fore-knowledge of all things is a doctrine conceded by the advocates for a power of ſelf-determination in men, I ſhall not think it neceſſary to enter upon the proof of it; but ſhew the certainty with which this doctrine inferreth an eſtabliſhed connexion in things, and a *previous* infallible certainty of all events which ever take place in the *moral*, as well as in the *natural* world.

It is impoſſible any event ſhould be *fore-known*, the future exiſtence of which is uncertain. Any event, the future exiſtence of which is in the nature of things uncertain, *may fail of taking place*. And to ſuppoſe that any ſuch event ſhould be *fore-known*, very ill conſiſteth with the poſſibility of its failing of ever gaining exiſtence. This is juſt the ſame as to ſuppoſe that the exiſtence of an event may be *fore-known*, which yet *may never take place*. *Fore-knowledge* of an event is a *knowledge* of the *certainty* of the future exiſtence of that event. But if there is not, in the nature of things,

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an abſolute certainty of the future exiſtence of an event; nothing can be more manifeſtly abſurd, than to ſuppoſe that its future exiſtence ſhould be *fore-known*. *Knowledge* of any thing, as it relateth to the preſent argument, is no other than the mind's *ſeeing*, or *perceiving*, *its certainty*. But to ſuppoſe that certainty ſhould be *ſeen* and *perceived* where *it is not*, and where it *doth not exiſt*, is irrational and abſurd. Where there is ſufficient ſtrength of faculties, it is poſſible that whatever *doth exiſt*, may be perceived and ſeen. But to ſee things *which are not*—*which do not exiſt*—requires very *peculiar* faculties, and a ſtretch of powers quite beyond all degree of human conception and comprehenſion, and even directly contradictory thereto. An event which is contingent, and the exiſtence of which is not now *certainly future*, cannot be ſeen to be future, by *immediate intuition*; for, by the ſuppoſition, there *is* no ſuch event *exiſting*. Strength of faculties, and quickneſs and acuteneſs of diſcernment, better enable beings to ſee and diſcover whatever *is*—whatever *doth exiſt*. But no conceivable ſtrength of faculties, and enlargement of powers, make any advances toward a diſcovery and ſight of what *is not*. Such an event, could it be conceived of, could not be ſeen *by means* of any thing elſe; for, by ſuppoſition, it is wholly unconnected with any thing elſe. Until, therefore, they who oppoſe the doctrine of an abſolute connexion in things, and an infallible antecedent certainty of all events, ſhew us ſome way in which events, ſo contingent as they imagine human volitions are, may be certainly fore-known, we ſhall think the doctrine of the divine preſcience an inſuperable difficulty in the way of their ſcheme. As all events, the exiſtence of which is *certain*, are capable of being *fore-known*; ſo, on the other hand, all events which are capable of being *fore-known*, have *antecedent certainty* of exiſtence. Fore-knowledge, and antecedent certainty of exiſtence, mutually imply each other.

The Ex—r ſeemeth ſenſible of a difficulty in his ſcheme,

ſcheme, ariſing from the doctrine of the preſcience of God; and doth not *even pretend* to anſwer and remove it. He ſays (p. 104.) "The difficulty ariſing from "the divine preſcience we pretend not to be able to "clear:" but adds, "it is ſufficient that it equally "lies againſt Mr. Edwards's doctrine." By what methods of reaſoning our Author perſuaded himſelf that there was any difficulty, from the doctrine of the divine preſcience, attending *his* doctrine of a previous infallible certainty of all events (which is the argument wherein the fore-knowledge of God is introduced by Mr. Edwards) it is difficult for me to apprehend. But that he ſhould think this anſwer *ſufficient*, may appear a little ſurpriſing to the reader, if he will be pleaſed to turn no farther back than to the note on the next preceding page of his book. There, the reader will find, our Author is objecting againſt Mr. Edwards's doctrine, that it makes God "the proper author, the "efficient cauſe, of all the ſins of men and devils." In reference to this, his words are, "To which ob-"jection it is really ſurpriſing to find Mr. Edwards "returning this anſwer—that the doctrine of his op-"poſers is involved in the ſame difficulty. For admit "it to be ſo, is this a proper anſwer? If either his "doctrine, or theirs, is juſtly chargeable with ſuch a "conſequence, by all the regard we owe to a Deity, "and Moral Governor, we are bound to reject a "ſcheme which contains ſuch an imputation on him." To deny the preſcience of God, or adopt a ſcheme of doctrine which cannot be reconciled with his certain fore-knowledge of all events, carries an imputation on God *as really* diſhonourable to him, as any of the obnoxious ſentiments ſuppoſed by our Author to be contained in that tract of Mr. Edwards, upon which he is animadverting. And yet this is a difficulty with which our *Author*'s ſcheme is *confeſſedly* embarraſſed, and from which he doth not even *pretend* to be able to clear it. *To which objection*, I may now ſay in my turn, *it is really ſurpriſing to find our Author returning this anſwer*—

anſwer—that the doctrine of his oppoſer is involved in the ſame difficulty. For admit it to be ſo; is this a proper anſwer? If either his doctrine, or theirs, is juſtly chargeable with ſuch a conſequence, by all the regard we owe to a Deity, and Moral Governor, we are bound to reject a ſcheme which contains ſuch an imputation on him. Surely the impropriety of returning ſuch an anſwer could not have made a very deep impreſſion upon the mind of our Author; or he muſt have remembered it, at leaſt for *one page* forward.

SECT. VI.

Wherein the notion of a power of ſelf-determination in the will, or of originating motion in ourſelves, is carefully conſidered, and the inconſiſtency of it ſhown.

THE idea of a power of ſelf-determination in men, and of originating motion in themſelves, hath been ſhewn by Mr. Edwards to be ſo perfectly inconſiſtent and abſurd, ſo repugnant to itſelf and to common ſenſe; that, until *his* reaſonings are ſhewn to be inconcluſive, and the ſophiſtry of *his* arguments expoſed, it ſeems unneceſſary that any thing farther ſhould be ſaid upon the ſubject. Propriety, however, will hardly ſuffer it to be wholly paſſed over in ſilence, in an eſſay on that agency, to which ſuch a power is eſteemed *eſſential* by thoſe who appear as advocates *for it*. It might be reaſonably expected of any one who attempteth publicly to expoſe "the falſhood of Mr. Edwards's ſcheme," that he ſhould provide a pertinent anſwer to the reaſons by which that Author ſupports it, and ſhew the weakneſs and inconcluſiveneſs of the arguments which he maketh uſe of in its defence. But this, I think, the Ex—r hath not even attempted. Nothing is ſaid, thro' his whole performance, to ſhew the unjuſtneſs or falſhood of that Author's reaſonings on this ſubject; or, in any meaſure,

to

to take off the edge or abate the force of them. The principal argument which our Author offereth in confutation of Mr. Edwards's reaſonings, *particularly on this ſubject*, is, that the doctrine of ſuch an infallible connexion in things, as is inconſiſtent with the power in queſtion, makes GOD the Author of ſin, and implieth the concurrence of poſitive divine efficiency to the taking place of ſuch an event. Whether this is an objection of any weight, and by any means ſufficient to overthrow the doctrine againſt which it is brought, I ſhall, by and by, conſider as carefully as I can.

Our Author, indeed, informs the public, in his preface, that "the inquiſitive may find a full anſwer to "the principal arguments of Mr. Edwards's book, ſpe-"culatively conſidered, in Dr. Clarke's demonſtration "of the being and attributes of God." If the Doctor's anſwer is ſo full and complete, our Author might doubtleſs have given a ſummary of it, in ſo clear and ſtriking a manner, and ſet it in ſo ſtrong and convincing a light, as would have put a final period to the debate on this intricate ſubject. He hath not, however, ſeen fit to take this method to elucidate his ſubject. The public, therefore, may perhaps diſſent from the Ex—r in opinion, concerning the fulneſs and perſpicuity of the Doctor's anſwer to the principal arguments of Mr. Edwards's book.

I would, therefore, in this ſection, propoſe the doctrine of a power of ſelf-determination in the will, or of originating motion in ourſelves, to free and careful examination.

I confeſs myſelf difficulted, however, to form any clear, determinate idea of the power in queſtion. A power of ſelf-determination appears to me incapable of definition or conception. If I miſrepreſent the opinion of our Author, and of Gentlemen on that ſide of the queſtion with him reſpecting liberty; it is not with deſign, but wholly for want of underſtanding what the opinion and ſentiment really is.

In ſpeaking of the power which, in his view, is ne-

ceſſary to moral liberty and agency, our Author termeth it "a power of ſelf-determination," (p. 34. 88.) and, after Dr. Clarke,* "a power of beginning motion—a power of ſelf-motion," &c. (p. 93, 94, 95. marg.) It is ſpoken of as *a ſelf-moving faculty—a principle or power* of *beginning motion.* (p. 91. marg.) The Ex—r conſiders it as a power whereby *men are the voluntary, deſigning cauſes of their own volitions.* (p. 81, 82.) It hence appears that the power which our Author inſiſts on as eſſential to moral liberty, is a capacity, or faculty, with which moral agents are endowed, *of beginning and originating their own internal motions and voluntary exertions:* even ſo that nothing but what is *in the man*, and what properly *belongeth to him*, can juſtly be conſidered as the *cauſe* of his mental exerciſes and volitions. Accordingly he urgeth that *we muſt be the cauſes of our own volitions.* (p. 82.) And repreſents the application of commands, invitations, monitions, &c. as being conſiſtent with a *freedom to either ſide.* (p. 109.) This is the power—theſe are the faculties, which, in our Author's view, are eſſential to moral action, virtue or vice, praiſe or blame.

MORAL ACTION, therefore, upon theſe principles, is ſomething of which there is no cauſe, reaſon, or ground whatſoever of its exiſtence. "For whatever "exiſts, muſt either have come into being out of no-

"thing

* The Doctor's pretended demonſtration of the reality of the exiſtence of that kind of liberty and freedom of will which he conſidereth as eſſential to the morality of actions, drawn from the power there is eſſentially in God to begin motion; which power it is ſuppoſed he hath communicated to his creatures; I muſt beg leave to conſider as a mere quibble upon the term *motion.* When he firſt advanceth his argument for *freedom of will*, from a power in the Deity to *begin motion;* his readers would naturally be led, from his manner of uſing the term, to underſtand him to ſpeak of *external, material motion*, though, afterwards, the term is ſo uſed as to convey the idea of *voluntary exerciſe—internal motion.* If the Doctor's argument for liberty is that there is a power in God, which, in kind and in a degree, he hath communicated to men, to begin *external, material motion;* with whom doth he imagine that he is contending? But becauſe there is a power in the Deity to begin *external, material motion*, doth it from thence follow that he hath a power to *begin* his own *internal, voluntary exerciſes and motions?* Or from a power in men to begin ſuch kind of motion, doth it at all follow, that they are poſſeſſed of *that power of will and ſelf-determination* which the Doctor urgeth? His premiſes and conſequence are certainly utter ſtrangers to each other. So weak an argument, from ſo ſtrong and maſterly a reaſoner, rendereth the cauſe itſelf, in which it is urged, juſtly ſuſpicious.

" thing, abſolutely without a cauſe ; or it muſt have " been produced by ſome *external cauſe* ; or it muſt " be ſelf-exiſtent ;" the two laſt of which will not either of them be pretended of creatures. (See Dr. Clarke's Demonſtrat. &c. p. 15. edit. 8.) This alſo is very manifeſtly implied by the terms SELF-MOTION, SELF-MOTIVE, POWER, SELF-MOVING FACULTY, &c. It is, by the very terms, a motion or exerciſe, for which there is no ground, reaſon or cauſe, *out of itſelf and of what properly belongeth to its very nature.* Nothing, therefore, can be more prepoſterous, than to attempt to give a reaſon for the exiſtence, or taking place, of that kind of *action*, of which our Author would predicate either virtue or vice, according to his own definition of it. The very attempt denieth the thing deſigned to be illuſtrated and proved. And yet our Author blames Mr. Edwards for not having ſhown the *cauſe* of volition. On the other hand, our Author blames Dr. Clarke for ſpeaking of a *ground, foundation*, *cauſe*, or *reaſon*, of God's being ; becauſe, as he ſuppoſeth, there is an utter impropriety in ſuppoſing any thing, in any ſenſe, the *prior* ground of the *firſt* exiſtence. (See p. 37, 38. marg.) And yet there is as manifeſt an impropriety in attempting to give a *reaſon* or *cauſe* for the exiſtence of *that* which is *ſelf-originated ;* as, to aſſign a *prior* ground of the *firſt* exiſtence.

According to our Author's definition of the *power* in queſtion, the following things, it may be obſerved, are eſſential to moral action.

1. That, immediately antecedent to choice, or voluntary exertion, man muſt be perfectly *indifferent* in the ſtate of his mind ; without the leaſt degree of inclination, bias, or preponderation, one way or the other ; or, to one thing more than to another. Accordingly we find that the advocates for the *power* under conſideration, expreſsly and avowedly plead for a *liberty of indifference*, as being eſſential to virtue or vice, praiſe or blame.

2. Another thing essential to the *power* under consideration, is, that there should be no prevailing tendency or preponderation, in the state of things, from *outward objects*, to any one particular choice or voluntary exercise, rather than another; from which tendency, or preponderation, there should arise a greater probability that *one particular volition* should take place, than another. All such prevailing tendency in outward objects must infallibly be of the nature of that necessity, which, in our Author's view, is inconsistent with all ideas of moral desert in actions. For as far as there is a preponderancy and prevailing tendency in things to one *certain*, particular volition, *rather than another*; so far a connexion taketh place between volition, and some antecedent, external cause. But such a connexion as this, in every degree of it, the Ex—r insists, is inconsistent with that sovereignty over our own actions, which, in his view, is essential to all ideas of moral desert.

3. In that indifference which is insisted on as essential to free and moral action, it is evident, man must be either perceptive and conscious, or utterly unconscious and impercipient. If, in that indifference, which, in our Author's view, is essential to the morality of action, the mind is perfectly *unconscious* and *impercipient*; it must be supposed, that, by an exertion of its own, for which (it is to be remembered) there was no antecedent cause, reason or ground, and in which it is, itself, utterly without any degree of consciousness or perception, it awakened and roused up itself into consciousness, activity and life. If, on the other hand, in that indifference which is immediately to precede the election of the mind, in order that its choice may be free, it is *percipient* and *conscious*; it must be supposed that the mind takes into its view the ideas of things proposed to its *free* choice, and surveyeth them in their several properties, relations and connexions, with a perfect indifference of mind, without the least bias or inclination one way or the other;

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until the noble, unfettered ſoul, by its non-ſovereign and arbitrary act, (which, by the way, is antecedent to *any degree* of *mental action* and *exertion*) commandeth itſelf into a bias and preponderation of diſpoſition towards *ſome one* of that variety of objects which are in view, rather than all others.

All theſe things appear to me neceſſary to that power of *ſelf-motion*, *ſelf-determination*, which, in our Author's view, is eſſential to moral agency, virtue and vice. For if there is any *internal bias* upon the mind, inclining and prevailingly diſpoſing it to any particular action or choice, rather than its oppoſite; or, if there is any thing in the ſtate, circumſtances, ſituation or connexion of *outward objects*, from whence ariſeth a prevailing tendency or preponderation, in any way, or on any account, to one certain, particular choice of the mind, rather than another; in that caſe it is manifeſt that either this *internal bias*, or the *external circumſtances* of things, concur as *cauſe* to the taking place of an act of will, and to determine it to be *as it is* and *not otherwiſe*. But that ſuch a connexion of volition with *any antecedent cauſe*, or ground of its exiſtence, is conſiſtent with that liberty and freedom which are eſſential to virtue and vice, appears to me utterly inconſiſtent with the whole drift of our Author's reaſonings, and every attempt to prove the irreconcilableneſs of moral neceſſity, with internal, human liberty. Particularly doth he expreſs himſelf to this purpoſe in p. 97. His words are theſe: "If external conſtraint or natural neceſſity renders a perſon incapable of ſuch commands as reſpect *material* action; moral neceſſity, or internal conſtraint, muſt render him equally incapable of ſuch commands as reſpect the exerciſes of the *mind*, or acts of volition."

But whether in this ſtate of perfect indifference, which immediately precedeth the *free choice and election* of the mind, a perſon is perceptive and conſcious, or utterly unconſcious and impercipient, doth not appear by any thing our Author hath particularly and expreſsly

expreſsly ſaid upon the ſubject. It may, therefore, be proper to conſider the matter more attentively, in each of theſe views; as the power urged by Arminian divines will certainly fall under the one or the other of theſe predicaments.

1. It will be worth our while to examine into the cauſe, or reaſon, of voluntary exertion, upon the ſuppoſition that man is perfectly *unconſcious* and *imperci-pient* immediately preceding the choice and election of his mind.

To common underſtandings it muſt appear difficult to conceive how any thing, in a ſtate of perfect imperceptivity and unconſciouſneſs, ſhould become active, conſcious and percipient, without the influence and concurrence of any external cauſe. That ſuch an event as this ſhould take place, is as utterly inconceivable, as that non-entity ſhould bring forth, and that an intelligent, perceptive being—yea, that thouſands and millions of ſuch—ſhould ſpring immediately out of nothing into exiſtence, without the creative power of another, and the influence of any external cauſe. That *perception* and *idea* ſhould ariſe out of ſomething which is as far from them as matter is from thought; and this, too, without the concurrence and influence of any external operation and cauſe; is a ſuppoſition which affronteth common ſenſe, teareth up the foundation of all our reaſonings, and is as full of abſurdity as the atheiſtical notion of a fortuitous concourſe of atoms concurring to the formation of this ſtupendous and beautiful ſyſtem.

To ſuppoſe man himſelf to be the *cauſe* of the *beginning* of his own perception, is quite as extravagant as to ſuppoſe him to be the cauſe of the beginning of his own exiſtence. That exertion of his while *imperci-pient*, which muſt be the productive cauſe of perception, would be quite as extraordinary, as the exertion of one who doth not exiſt (however abſurd and ſelf-repugnant the ſuppoſition) in order to bring himſelf into being and exiſtence. And to conſider man as the

cauſe

cauſe of his own conſciouſneſs and exertion—there being neither conſciouſneſs nor exertion in him, otherwiſe than as a *fruit* of the operation of this myſterious cauſe—is to give ſuch a view of *cauſe*, as at once ſtrips it of every thing which contains in it a reaſon for the exiſtence, or taking place, of any effect—or whereby it is adequate to the production of the effect, of which it aſſigned as the ground, reaſon or cauſe : and therefore leaveth the ſubject reſpecting man's firſt becoming perceptive, animate and conſcious, as to any ground or reaſon of ſuch an event, as perfectly in the dark as if no reaſon had been pretended to be aſſigned for it.

To ſuppoſe that man ſhould be the *cauſe* of his own *perception, by ſome exertions of his own*, is to make the effect anticipate its cauſe, and gain exiſtence without any of *its* aſſiſtance and influence. For, man, *in this exertion of his* for the production of perception, muſt be ſuppoſed to be perceptive and conſcious ; otherwiſe, the exertion, whatever it may *produce* in him, cannot properly be called *his* exertion. So, likewiſe, a man muſt be *voluntary*, in that exertion of his, whereby he produceth his own volitions. And, if ſo, the cauſe or reaſon, itſelf, which is adduced for the ſolution of one difficulty, bringeth another as great along with it ; and will do ſo *in infinitum* : and, therefore, is a cauſe, or reaſon, which doth not at all aſſiſt us in our inquiries after truth, or anſwer any purpoſe in reaſoning and argumentation.

2. It is queſtionable, whether the difficulty reſpecting man's being the *cauſe* of his own voluntary exertions, would be in any meaſure removed by ſuppoſing him to have idea or object in view, immediately preceding ſuch exertion. The Ex—r conſtantly ſuppoſeth that men are the *deſigning cauſes of thoſe inward acts wherein the nature of virtue and vice conſiſteth.* (See p. 67. 82.) If, immediately antecedent to any voluntary exertion, we are to conſider man as having *idea* and object in view ; we are to conceive him as contemplating, with a perfect indifferency, that variety of

of objects which surround him, and present themselves to his view; having not the least degree of affection for one, more than another, until, by a certain noble sovereignty of his own, he *determines himself* into a preponderating bias, or inclination of mind, to one certain object, rather than another. Here the supposition under consideration presenteth to our view *a more philosophic kind of animal* than is probably to be found in our world; or, even in any part of the creation of God! And yet this is the state, these the circumstances, it is necessary for man to be in, immediately antecedent to any mental inclination, or voluntary exertion; in order that such inclination and exertion may have moral quality—virtue or vice—predicated of it.

Upon the supposition that such an indifference as this is essential to the morality of action, and necessary immediately to precede the choice of the mind, in order that such choice may be free; I desire that the following things may be observed.

1. Such an indifferency, or liberty to either side, as implieth a freedom from all propensity—all preponderating influence or bias, whereby it becomes more certain, or probable, from any consideration whatever, that choice, or volition, will terminate upon one object, than another; is utterly inconsistent with all ideas of any *depravity* in human nature in its present fallen state, or any *disadvantage* mankind are laid under by our original sin and fall. * In p. 105 of his book, our Author speaks of an *impotency* derived to mankind from Adam, in such terms as would naturally lead his readers

* Dr. Whitby, on the five points, (p. 302, 303. edit. II.) alloweth that it may be consistent with a state of trial and freedom, for it to become *exceeding difficult* for men to do good, and for men to have a *strong bent, and powerful inclination*, to what is evil. And Dr. Taylor, in his *scripture doctrine*, &c. (edit. II.) tells us, (p. 228.) "That we are very *apt*, in a world full of temptation, to be de-"ceived and drawn into sin by bodily appetites; that when once we are under "the government of these appetites, it is at least *exceeding difficult*, if not IM-"PRACTICABLE, to recover ourselves by the mere force of reason; and, conse-"quently, that we stand in need of the *life-giving Spirit*." How far these sentiments are consistent with that power of *self-determination* insisted on by our Author, and so repeatedly urged by these Gentlemen themselves, I leave to the reader to judge.

readers to imagine that he conceived we were ſubject-ed to certain *diſadvantages*, by the defection of our firſt parents from God. And in p. 61. 62. he admitteth that ſuch a ſtate of will may be required of us, as is forever impoſſible ; but ſuppoſeth that this can be only on ſuppoſition of a power once given, but loſt. From ſuch like paſſages and expreſſions, his readers would be naturally led to conclude that the Ex—r himſelf is of opinion that mankind are laid under ſome diſadvan-tages, and are under ſome obſtructions in the way of attaining that perfection and holineſs which is required and demanded of them ; and are under ſome prevail-ing bias or tendency, either internal or external, to that ſin and wickedneſs which is their utter ruin. But, this notwithſtanding, he inſiſteth that ſuch a power of ſelf-determination as implieth a *freedom to either ſide*, is eſſential to that liberty which is neceſſary to the morality of action. To me this appeareth inconſiſt-ent ; and to include a conceſſion that we may be under moral obligation to perform ſomething to which we have not the freedom in queſtion, and to which we have not a power of ſelf-determination. If it is eſſen-tial to the ideas of moral action, that man be poſſeſſed of ſuch a power of ſelf-determination as implieth a freedom from all bias or preponderation, either inter-nal or external ; the conſequence is unavoidable, either that mankind, in their preſent ſtate, are not moral agents ; or, that, whatever may have been con-ceived, by gloomy minds, of the preſent *lapſed, degen-erate* ſtate of human nature, mankind do in fact poſſeſs all that perfection and dignity of nature with which Adam was endowed in his original ſtate ; and are no farther the ſubjects of either praiſe or blame, than they act from the ſame *generous ſovereignty* and *noble indif-ference* with which it is ſuppoſed he was originally created and endowed.

2. Such a power of ſelf-determination in men, as implieth an entire indifferency of will and affection, and a freedom from all internal bias and inclination,

and all preponderation or tendency arising from outward circumstances, situation or objects, to any particular, definite choice; is altogether inconsistent with the idea of a sinner's being ever *abandoned of God, and given over to the commission of sin.* It hath been the general opinion of Protestant Divines, that sinners are, sometimes, in such a sense abandoned of God, and given over to sinning, as implieth a strong, prevailing tendency in the state and circumstances of things, either internal or external, or both, to that moral evil and wickedness which is exceedingly provoking to him, and which draweth down his displeasure upon them. And this opinion is sufficiently authorized by the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans. When he had been giving the character of the heathen world, and mentioning their proneness to idolatry, whereby they "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, he says, (ver. 24.) *Wherefore, also, God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts.* And (ver. 26.) *For this cause God gave them up to vile affections.* And even the Ex—r himself, though, as it appears to me, in direct opposition to the leading sentiments of his whole book, yet appears, by some things said in it, to be of the same opinion. In p. 107, he speaks of *sinners being abandoned and given up of God;* and formeth an argument upon it, and draws a conclusion from it, as he imagineth, in favour of a power of self-determination in men. It is difficult to conceive what our Author can intend by the expression of *sinners being abandoned and given up of God*, short of a prevailing tendency in the state of things, either internal or external, to that sin which is their ruin—some such tendency as is utterly inconsistent with a *freedom to either side.* And it is very manifest that this is the sense in which he useth the phrase, by the argument which he foundeth upon it, in order to establish his own sentiment—a sentiment directly repugnant to it, and most perfectly inconsistent with it. For as far as

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any of the determinations of the mind take place under ſuch an influence as muſt certainly be implied in the expreſſions of *being abandoned* and *given up of God*, (if they have any meaning) they cannot be *ſelf-originated* and *ſelf-moved ;* and, therefore, in our Author's ſenſe of freedom, cannot be free. If perſons being abandoned and given up of God *doth not* import any prevailing tendency and preponderation, in the ſtate and circumſtances of things, to vice and wickedneſs, rather than to virtue and holineſs ; certainly no weight can be laid upon the ſuppoſition that ſinners are ſometimes abandoned and given up of God, as an argument to prove that a power of *ſelf-determination*, and *a freedom to either ſide*, is a privilege of which they had been *heretofore* poſſeſſed : if it *doth* import ſuch a prevailing tendency and preponderation, &c. then ſurely that liberty, which is eſſential to the *morality* of actions, is conſiſtent with a *prevailing tendency* in the ſtate and circumſtances of things, either external or internal, or both, to thoſe actions and determinations which are denominated morally evil.

To ſpeak of ſinners being abandoned and given up of God, without importing a prevailing tendency to ſuch choice and actions as are morally evil, in diſtinction from thoſe which are morally virtuous and good ; is to talk unintelligibly and without meaning. To ſpeak of a power of ſelf-motion, ſelf-determination, as ſomething which is conſiſtent with a prevailing tendency in things to *one prrticular event* in diſtinction from all others, and in oppoſition to them, is to uſe terms in a manner equally unmeaning and unintelligible. Either, therefore, there can no ſuch thing in nature take place, reſpecting any man, as may, with the leaſt appearance of propriety, be termed his being *abandoned and given up of God ;* or, on the other hand, that liberty which conſiſteth in a freedom to either ſide—a freedom from all preponderating tendency and bias, in the ſtate and circumſtances of things, to one particular choice and action, rather than another—

cannot, in the nature of things, be eſſential to moral agency, virtue and vice.

Our Author ſaith, that ſinners being abandoned and given up of God, implieth that they *once had a moral power to turn and live*. In order that the perſpicuity and pertinency of this argument might appear, it was incumbent, I think, on our Author, to determine whether ſinners are criminal or blameworthy for not returning unto God, *after they are abandoned*, &c. If they *are not*, their being *abandoned* lays no foundation for any increaſe of guilt and wickedneſs, nor at all inferreth any probability of it; but the contrary; and we muſt wait for farther explanation, in order to determine the meaning of the expreſſion. If they *are* criminal and blameworthy for not turning unto God *after they are abandoned and given up of him*; then, by our Author's own conceſſion, *moral inability* is not inconſiſtent with our ideas of virtue and vice, and deſert of praiſe and blame.

It is very manifeſt, that the phraſe of *being abandoned and given up of God*, as it hath been commonly uſed by Divines, carries with it the idea of ſome degree of *neceſſity*, of ſome kind or other, of the commiſſion of ſin; and, therefore, the conſideration, that any action, or exerciſe of the human will, is the fruit and conſequence of ſuch neceſſity, by no means deſtroyeth the moral quality of it; nor is it conſiſtent with its being morally evil and criminal in the ſight of God.

But it may be now proper more particularly to inquire, whether our having idea or object *in view*, while yet in a ſtate of perfect indifference of will, and without all degrees of *bias* and *inclination* of mind, is a ſuppoſition which would make it at all more conceivable or ſuppoſable that we ſhould *originate* our own inclinations and voluntary exertions, than if we were, immediately preceding the exerciſes of our will, in a ſtate of perfect imperceptivity; as unconſcious as the air we breathe, or the earth we walk on. It is to be remembered, that, by the ſuppoſition, this view of

object hath not the leaſt tendency in it to determine the will, or excite or engage the affection. Such a tendency as this, in that intellectual view of object which is utterly without affection, is as inconſiſtent with a power of ſelf-motion, ſelf-determination, in men, as that very doctrine of neceſſity which is ſo obnoxious to our Author. Such a tendency would imply, that volition ariſeth, at leaſt in part, from ſome external influence; and would infer a degree of *connexion* with ſome antecedent, extrinſic cauſe; and, therefore, a certain degree of *neceſſity* of its exiſtence: both which are perfectly repugnant to all ideas of that ſovereignty over our own wills, which muſt certainly be implied in a power of *ſelf-motion*, *ſelf-determination*. For any one to urge mere idea, or view of object, in which mankind are perfectly paſſive, as a reaſon by which to account for a power of *ſelf-motion* and *ſelf-determination* in men, is at once to confute himſelf, and give up his own argument; as it placeth the cauſe of the determination of volition in ſomething extrinſic of the will itſelf; connecting it with ſomething wherein man is acknowledged to be entirely paſſive. The very attempt, indeed, of any perſon of theſe principles, to give a *reaſon* for human volition, at once confuteth his own ſentiments; as it implieth, that volition is an *effect* which ſtandeth in need of a *cauſe* to be the ground and ſupport of its exiſtence, equally with other dependent and created things.

It is acknowledged, that mere intellectual perception of object is entirely diſtinct from the exertion of the power in queſtion: yea, and that the mind often chooſeth, and exerteth this *ſelf-motive* power in direct oppoſition to that propriety, that fitneſs and ſuitableneſs in objects, which are apprehended by the judgment and underſtanding. * (See p. 15, 16. marg.) And

* As an argument in favour of the liberty in queſtion, our Author quoteth Dr. Clarke, in his fourth reply to Leibnitz, where he ſaith, that "*Intelligent beings* "are *agents*; not *paſſive* in being *moved* by *motives*, as a *balance* is by *weights*; "but they have *active powers*, and do *move themſelves*, ſometimes upon the view "of *ſtrong* motives, ſometimes upon *weak* ones, and ſometimes where things are "abſolutely

And certainly a propriety and fitneſs in things, which is not the leaſt regarded in the determination of the will, can no more be a ground and reaſon of thoſe determinations, than if the idea of propriety did not exiſt in the mind, and the mind was wholly unconſcious both of object and fitneſs. It is, therefore, as ſuppoſable (and, upon our Author's principles, muſt be acknowledged to be ſo) that voluntary motion and exertion ſhould ariſe inſtantaneouſly and immediately out of non-entity, without the operation and influence of any extrinſic cauſe, as that it ſhould take place in a mind which hath idea and object in view, without the concurrence and influence of any ſuch cauſe.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that it is not pretended that human volitions take place in the ſame manner as any event muſt be conceived to do (were any ſuch thing poſſible) which ſhould ſtart into life and being immediately out of non-exiſtence, without the concurrence of any extrinſic cauſe; but that MAN, who is created and upheld every moment by the mighty power of God, is the proper author and cauſe of his own volitions; ſuch a ſuppoſition would not at all relieve the opinion of a power of ſelf-motion, ſelf-determination, from the difficulties which embarraſs it; nor would it in

" abſolutely *indifferent*. In which *latter caſe* there may be *very good reaſon* to " *act*, though two or more *ways* of acting may be abſolutely *indifferent*." To which obſervation of the Doctor Mr. Leibnitz in his fifth paper replieth: " It " muſt alſo be conſidered, that, properly ſpeaking, motives do not *act* upon the " mind, as weights do upon a balance; but it is rather the mind that acts by " virtue of the motives, which are *its diſpoſitions* to act. And therefore to pre- " tend, as the Author does here, that the mind prefers ſometimes weak motives " to ſtrong ones, and even that it *prefers* that which is *indifferent* before *motives*; " this, I ſay, is to divide the *mind* from the *motives*, as if they were *without* the " *mind*, as the weight is diſtinct from the balance; and as if the *mind* had, be- " ſides *motives*, other *diſpoſitions* to act, by virtue of which it could *reject* or *accept* " the *motives*. Whereas, in truth, the *motives* comprehend *all the diſpoſitions* " which the mind can have to act voluntarily; for they *include* not only the *rea-* " *ſons*, but alſo the *inclinations* ariſing from paſſions, or other preceding impreſ- " ſions. Wherefore if the mind ſhould prefer a weak *inclination* to a ſtrong one, " it would act againſt itſelf, and otherwiſe than it is *diſpoſed* to act. Which " ſhows that the Author's notions, contrary to mine, are ſuperficial, and appear " to have no ſolidity in them, when they are well conſidered. To aſſert, alſo, " that the *mind may have good reaſons to act*, when it has no *motives*, and *when* " *things are abſolutely indifferent*, as the Author explains himſelf here; this, I " ſay, is a manifeſt contradiction: for if the mind has *good reaſons* for taking the " *part* it takes, then the things are not *indifferent* to the mind." (Papers between Mr. Leibnitz and Dr. Clarke. p. 121. and 167. 169.)

in the leaſt aſſiſt us in forming any ideas and conceptions of the power in queſtion, its properties, or the law and manner of its operation.

If man is the *author* and *cauſe* of his own volitions, it is unqueſtionable that he muſt, in ſome way, exert himſelf *in order to produce them*. *Cauſe* always takes place and is exerted previous to the exiſtence of its effect. If man is the *cauſe* of his own acts of will, he muſt exerciſe ſome power in order to produce theſe acts. That which *doth nothing—exerteth* nothing *in order to an effect*, and ſo, of courſe, *antecedent* to the effect—hath nothing in it of that relation which we mean to expreſs by the word *cauſe*; and is ſtript of every thing whereby it is fitted for being the *reaſon* of an event. If man, therefore, is the *cauſe* of his own volitions, he muſt be ſo *by ſome exertion*. To repreſent him to be the *cauſe* of his own acts of will, otherwiſe than by any exertion, is to bring into view a *cauſe* of ſuch a ſingular and peculiar nature, as containeth in it no manner of reaſon for the exiſtence of its effect. If man is the *cauſe* of his own volitions, *by ſome exertion* of his own; it muſt be an exertion which is either *voluntary*, or *involuntary*. If the exertion, by which man is the *cauſe* of his own acts of will, is *voluntary*; then this exertion itſelf is *an act of the will*;—there being no juſt ground of any diſtinction between *an act of the will*, and *voluntary exertion*. And, conſequently, this exertion of man, whereby he is the cauſe of his own acts of will, is itſelf the very effect, of which we are endeavouring to explore the cauſe, in man. To ſay that man, by his own free, voluntary exertions, produceth and is the cauſe of his own acts of will—free, voluntary exertions—makes not the leaſt advances toward a ſolution of the queſtion, "What is the *cauſe* of an act or exertion of the will?" nor at all aſſiſteth us in exploring it. To ſuppoſe this exertion of men, whereby they beget and produce their own volitions, to be *involuntary*, and to have no exerciſe of will in it, would be attended with ſeveral difficulties. For,

1. Such

1. Such an exertion as this muſt imply ſome faculty or power in human nature, which hath never yet been diſcovered; but hath hitherto eſcaped the notice and obſervation of the moſt ſubtile and critical inquirer. It is not the faculty of *underſtanding*: for, with the dictates of this faculty, it is acknowledged, the *choice* of the mind is, in no degree, connected; being often in oppoſition to them. And *that*, ſurely, cannot be the *cauſe* of an event, the whole influence of which (all the influence which it is, by the nature of it, fitted to have) is utterly reſiſted by the event. And what *powers* there are, in human nature, for any to exert, beſide thoſe of underſtanding and will, we muſt wait to be informed by ſuch as urge, that all the acts of our wills are the effects of our own exertions.

2. To ſuppoſe that ſome human exertion, which is without volition and properly diſtinct from it, is yet the *cauſe* of acts of will in us; is to ſuppoſe volition to be not only connected with *ſome* antecedent cauſe, but *that* ſuch an one as is entirely *involuntary*, and therefore *neceſſary*, with all that neceſſity which can be predicated of any mere natural effect. This is at once inconſiſtent with all the ideas of liberty given by our Author, and utterly ſubverſive of a power of ſelf-motion, ſelf-determination.

3. If volition is an effect of ſuch human exertion as is *without volition*, it muſt, of conſequence, be an exertion in which *man* is not an agent. How any man ſhould exert himſelf and be an agent in any thing wherein he hath no exerciſe of will and voluntary choice, is quite inconceivable. Nor is it leſs difficult to give a reaſon why ſuch an exertion ſhould be attributed unto him as *his own act*. If the exertion, which is the *cauſe* of an act of will in man, is without any act or agency of man's will in it; it muſt, of conſequence, be an exertion in which man is entirely and perfectly paſſive; and, therefore, an exertion which can, with no propriety, be termed *our action*. And if it is a *cauſe*, in the exerciſe and operation of which man is

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paſſive and involuntary; it may as well be *external* as *internal*, as to any advantage mankind can ever reap from it, or any *improvement* it makes in liberty, by removing it farther from neceſſity.

If the power, which mankind are ſuppoſed to have over their own wills, and to *produce* acts and exertions of will in themſelves, hath no degree of choice, preference or volition in it; it *may be* that it never will beget, or produce, choice. And a man may exerciſe his *ſovereignty* over his own will, to as little purpoſe as a poor beggar, covered with rags, exerts his ſovereign authority over kingdoms and realms, which his ſick, diſordered brain hath made him imagine are ſubject to his ſole command and arbitrary will. *That* muſt ſurely be a very miſerable and impotent ſort of a power over the will, which, in its utmoſt ſtrength of exertion, will never produce the leaſt degree of volition, or choice—volition and choice being, nevertheleſs, under ſome other and more effectual law of operation. And yet it is not at all ſurpriſing, that this ſovereign power over the will ſhould never bring the leaſt degree of volition or choice into exiſtence; becauſe, by the ſuppoſition, it is never exerted *with any ſuch deſign and choice*, or put forth *for any ſuch purpoſe*. It is altogether inconceivable how *that* power of will ſhould, in any wiſe, account for the taking place of *choice*, and volition, which hath no greater tendency to ſuch an event than to its contrary, even in the utmoſt ſtrength of its exertion; and which, indeed, doth not *prefer* choice, or tend to it more than to its oppoſite.

Whoever ſpeaketh of a ſelf-originating motion in the mind of man, or of an exerciſe of will begun by itſelf, conveys no manner of idea beyond that of the bare exerciſe of volition and motion. There is ſomething, in the very nature of things, repelling every idea of any thing farther in men, and reſiſting every conception of it: the very idea (if I may ſo call it) of a power of ſelf-motion, ſelf-determination, in vari-

ous ways deſtroying itſelf, every way militating againſt itſelf and its own exiſtence, and entirely ſhutting itſelf out of the world.

Nothing farther, it appears to me, can be ſaid, to define this ſelf-determinating power of the will, than, that the nature and quality of volition is to be *determined* by ſomething which is to be found in volition itſelf, and belonging to it: juſt as we ſay, that a certain diſpoſition of equal lines *determines* or *conſtitutes* a ſquare; and equal diſtance from a centre, a circle. In ſuch a ſenſe as this, both a ſquare and a circle are determined by themſelves; i. e. *ſelf-determined*. If this is what Gentlemen mean by a ſelf-determining power, they will, probably, have no one to contend with them. If they intend any thing farther, it muſt be ſomething, of which no diſtinct, determinate idea can be formed; and which, indeed, the very ſuppoſition of its being would ſhut out of exiſtence.

That acts of will ſhould be connected, in their exiſtence, with ſome antecedent and extrinſic cauſe, and the agent be eſteemed virtuous, or vicious, for exerciſes of will which take place in ſuch a connexion; is a ſentiment, which, in our Author's opinion, is embarraſſed with inſuperable difficulties. The Ex—r ſuppoſeth, that if it might be admitted that men are *the voluntary, deſigning cauſe of thoſe inward acts wherein the nature of virtue and vice conſiſts*, this would unravel the myſtery, and ſolve the whole difficulty. (See p. 67.) This, however, would be, at beſt, but running into one difficulty, in order to avoid another. It is here conceded, that the nature of virtue and vice conſiſteth in the *inward acts* of men: that is, as our Author doubtleſs meaneth, their volitions. But there can be no moral quality, either virtue or vice, in the volitions of men, unleſs they themſelves are the voluntary, deſigning cauſes of them. This is our Author's argument; than which, a more extraordinary, I preſume, is no where to be found.

Will our Author inſiſt, that none of our inward acts

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are either virtuous, or vicious, unleſs they are the *effects* of our own *voluntary deſign*? If it is indeed ſo, the conſequence is unavoidable, that the firſt in the ſeries—that inward act which alone, on *his* principles, is ſelf-originated, ſelf-determined—can have no *moral quality* predicated of it: for this, it is to be remembered, is not the *effect* of our own voluntary deſign.

In order that any thing may be either virtuous or vicious, upon our Author's principles, it is neceſſary that it ſhould be the effect of our own voluntary deſign. Whatever, therefore, is ſelf-originated, and doth not ariſe out of ſuch a cauſe, cannot have virtue or vice predicated of it. Conſequently, that exerciſe which is original, and firſt in the ſeries, ſelf-determined and ſelf-moved, being not the *effect* of voluntary deſign, nor connected with it, is utterly without virtue; and as perfectly free from all taint, or ſtain, of vice.

And yet, upon our Author's principles, it is eſſential to the very nature of virtue and vice, that the volitions of agents ſhould be utterly unconnected with all antecedent cauſe. Therefore thoſe volitions, which are the *effects* of our own free, voluntary deſign, being, in their nature, connected with ſome antecedent cauſe, are conſequently deſtitute of all degrees of virtue and vice.

Nor are theſe the only ways in which our Author's ſentiments are inconſiſtent with the very being either of virtue or vice. For it is a favourite ſentiment of his, that there is no more in the effect, than in its cauſe. He ſays (p. 58.) "There is no evading the "conſequence, indeed, that the whole guilt of men's "evil diſpoſitions is chargeable on God, not themſelves, or on blind neceſſity and fatality, if the "things Mr. Edwards advanceth be true."—Meaning, doubtleſs, what he advanceth in proof of an eſtabliſhed, unfailing connexion between all events or effects, and ſome antecedent cauſe. Thoſe volitions, therefore, which are the *effects* of our own voluntary de-

ſign, cannot, *for this very reaſon*, have either virtue or predicated of them. Further,

"There being no more in the effect, than in its "cauſe," it is, upon the principle I am conſidering, ridiculous to ſpeak of thoſe volitions which are the effects of ſuch an act of the will as doth not ariſe out of a *former* voluntary deſign (it being itſelf *firſt* and *original* in the ſeries) as having moral quality in it, or being capable of virtue or vice. The *ſelf-moved, ſelf-determined* act of will, is neither virtuous nor vicious, becauſe it is not the *fruit* or *effect* of our own voluntary deſign. That which is the *effect* of our *original, firſt* voluntary deſign, cannot be virtuous or vicious, for this reaſon, viz. That there was no virtue nor vice in its *cauſe*. So that, upon the whole, nothing can be more irrational, inconſiſtent and abſurd, than to ſuppoſe that there can be any ſuch thing, in the univerſe, as we mean to expreſs by the terms *virtue* and *vice*. That original voluntary deſign, which is the *cauſe* of our own inward acts, cannot be, itſelf, vicious, for this obvious reaſon, viz. That it doth not ariſe out of a *vicious cauſe*. Thoſe inward acts, which are the *effects* of our own voluntary deſign, cannot be vicious, for two reaſons: The firſt is, that they *are effects*—not ſelf-originated, ſelf-moved; the ſecond is, that (there being no more in the effect than in its cauſe) they did not ariſe out of a vicious *cauſe*.

Thus doth it appear, that the idea of ſelf-motion, ſelf-determination, that is, a motion originated by itſelf, and by its own cauſal influence brought into exiſtence, is "in itſelf as evidently and clearly a "contradiction, as that two and two ſhould make five," or any other the moſt abſurd and contradictory ſuppoſition that can be named. And therefore, though challenged in ſo high a tone, by ſo great a man as Dr. Clarke, we ſhall not be "aſhamed" utterly to deny that there is, or ever was, or can be, any ſuch thing; or, that any man ever had an idea of it. And here, if I might be allowed, I would tranſcribe a ſentence from

from the Doctor, and apply it to the present case. His words are these, "A man of any considerable 'modesty would be almost tempted rather to doubt 'the truth of his faculties, than to take upon him to 'assert one such intolerable absurdity, merely for 'avoiding another." (ed. 8. p. 85.)

From such a description and representation of those internal exercises and motions which are, alone, in the sense of these Gentlemen, the subjects of moral desert: —That they must be the *fruit* and *effect* of our own voluntary design; yet *self-originated*, *self-moved*:—That, in order to their being denominated morally evil, they must *arise out of an evil cause*, *and be the effects of it*; and yet, in order to their being denominated morally evil, it is absolutely necessary that they should be *utterly unconnected with any extrinsic*, *antecedent cause*:—That their moral evil doth not consist in the *nature* of them, but their *cause*; and yet that they have nothing beside their *nature* predicable of them; out of themselves, and distinguishable from their peculiar *nature*, they having *no cause*:—And, finally, that if they are *not caused* by our own voluntary design, they cannot be justly chargeable with moral evil; and yet if they *are caused by any thing* out of themselves, they can, *for that very reason*, have no moral evil predicated of them:—I say, from such descriptions and definitions, as these, of those kinds of exercises and motions which alone are capable of moral desert, what can any one think—what can the world of mankind conclude—but that all our ideas of *morality* are imaginary and vain, and the very terms *virtue* and *vice*, empty and insignificant?—That the very ideas of moral evil and sin are the offspring of the frighted imaginations and disordered brain of ignorant, pedantic recluses, educated in the gloomy vale of superstition and ignorance—prejudices from which the mind can be unfettered only by breathing the freer air of social pleasure, and thus opening and expanding, to receive more noble and liberal ideas and sentiments

of

of things? What leſs, than to eradicate from the minds of men thoſe uneaſy apprehenſions, which, notwithſtanding all the arts of *philoſophy*, will many times get poſſeſſion of them, can people in general apprehend to be the deſign of Gentlemen, who, in their definitions of moral evil, make uſe of ſuch nice, ſubtile and peculiar diſtinctions—ſhifting and changing, and affirming and denying, in the very ſame breath, one and the ſame thing? According to ſuch like reaſonings as theſe, who but muſt apprehend that the natural notions of men, concerning moral good and evil, are an effect of that extraordinary machinery which is ſuppoſed by a late writer * to have been introduced by the wiſe Author of Nature, that we might receive a nice and *artificial* ſet of feelings, merely for the ſake of giving conſcience a commanding power and influence.

But it ſeemeth unneceſſary any farther to purſue the argument; eſpecially ſince the objections made by Mr. Edwards againſt a power of ſelf-determination in men, and his clear, nervous and concluſive reaſoning and argumentation againſt the poſſibility of any ſuch power, are by our Author paſſed over in ſilence, and left in their full ſtrength.

But before I finiſh the ſection, I beg to be indulged in a conjecture concerning the riſe and origin of the notion of this myſterious, incomprehenſible power in men. I cannot but apprehend, that the opinion aroſe from a degree of abſtraction, in the ideas of men, of *exerciſes* from *agents*; which is a refinement far above vulgar underſtandings, if not above truth itſelf. From this abſtracted idea of *action*, we have been taught to look upon *the agent* as one thing—his *action*, as another:—For what can be more abſurd, ſay they, than to talk of an *exerciſe*, without *ſomething* to act?—an *action* without an *agent*? Hence men have been led to conſider *an action* and *the agent*, as it were, different ſubſtances: the one, the *cauſe*; the other, the *effect*. But it is far from being true, that *action* (I mean mental,

* Lord Kaims's eſſay on the principles of morality, &c. See p. 211.

al, voluntary exercise) and *agent* may *justly* be consid-
ered under these different predicaments, and as sus-
aining the different relations to each other which we
nean to express by the terms *cause* and *effect*. The
action of a man noteth only a certain *mode* of his ex-
istence; it being merely an *accident*, of which man is
he *subject*. There is as little reason in considering
man and his *exercise* as distinct things, sustaining the
different relations to each other of *cause* and *effect*, as
here is for making a like distinction between *body* and
its motion: treating of the former, as *cause*; the lat-
er, as *effect*.

If *agent* and *action* do not admit of that relative dis-
inction to each other, which we mean to express by
he terms cause and effect, it is perfectly unmeaning
nd unintelligible to speak of an agent as being the
designing cause of his own voluntary exercises and
actions. We may with equal propriety speak of the
air, as the *cause* of the wind which bloweth; or of the
sea, as the *cause* of the fluctuation of its waves. Man
may, according to the common use of terms, be prop-
erly styled the *voluntary*, *designing cause* of such out-
ward events or effects, as are immediately connected
with the choice and preference of his mind, which we
commonly term *external actions*. But it is only in an
indirect, figurative sense, that *any external*, *outward*
event whatsoever can be called *our action*; and only
on account of its special relation to something which
is, in the strict sense, *our action*. Nothing beside our
own voluntary exertions are, strictly speaking, *our*
action. Herein alone are we agents—are we active.
And for us to consider our volitions as the *effects* of
our own voluntary design, would be only to make
volition the effect of volition—the effect of itself; or
to place moral evil, not in volition itself, but in the
agent its *cause*. According to which principle, moral
evil must be sought in something which is antecedent
to volition, and entirely distinct from it; and, there-
fore, not in the *voluntary*, *designing* cause of it.

But

But if it is indeed ſo that there is no ground for ab
ſtracting *action* from *agent* (meaning by *action*, inter
nal, voluntary exerciſe and exertion) any more tha
there is for abſtracting *accident* from its *ſubject*, or *mo
tion* from the body *moved*; it will certainly follow
that ſuch a relative diſtinction, as we mean to expreſ
by the words *cauſe* and *effect*, doth not ſubſiſt betwee
agent and his *action*. And there muſt be as great and
evident an impropriety of ſpeech, in ſaying that men
are the *cauſes* of their own actions, as in ſaying that the
loadſtone is the cauſe of its magnetiſm, or ſugar of its
ſweetneſs.

If men had not conſidered moral, voluntary exertion
in a degree of abſtraction quite unphiloſophical and
inconceivable, I muſt beg leave to ſay, that moral
agents never would have been thought of, as the *volun-
tary*, *deſigning cauſes* of their own *volitions*; any more
than a ſubject, of its accidents; or *being*, of its exiſ-
tence. And when it is once conſidered, that *agent* and
his action do not bear the relation to each other of
cauſe and *effect*; then, probably, the *cauſe* of volition
will no longer be thought to belong to the inquiry into
the nature of that moral agency, or liberty, which is
eſſential to virtue and vice, praiſe and blame.*

Having thus proved, as I apprehend, the perfect in-
conſiſtency of the notion of a power of ſelf-determina-
tion in men; the conſequence clearly is, that all exer-
ciſes of human volition ariſe wholly from ſome extrin-
ſic cauſe. And as it will probably be granted, on this
hypotheſis, that all cauſes derive their influence ulti-
mately from God; I beg leave to take this for granted,
and ſhall build ſeveral of my arguments, in the ſecond
part of this Treatiſe, on this ſuppoſition.

SECT. VI.

* "Obj. Whence came this *moral impotency*?——What have you to do,
"to aſk this here?——You have no need to aſk it for the underſtanding of what
"I have ſpoken. It can ſtand on its own legs, without flying to that foreign,
"or remote help.——Let it come which way it will, you ſee it doth not excuſe;
"and ſo do all men, whatſoever they may ſay to the contrary."——Trueman's
Diſcourſe of Natural and Moral Impotency. page 142.

SECT. VII.

Wherein it is ſhown, that the doctrine of an infallible previous certainty of all human volitions doth not imply that mankind are but mere machines.

THE advocates for a power of ſelf-determination in men loudly exclaim againſt the doctrine of an antecedent infallible certainty of the voluntary exerciſes of men, as being utterly inconſiſtent with all ideas of moral liberty; ſubjecting all the actions of mankind to the *ſevere*, *rigid* laws of *abſolute fate*; making the mind of man but a curious piece of mere machinery, and all the exerciſes of it no other than mechanical motions. This is a weapon which hath been uſed with as much ſucceſs, perhaps, in defence of a power of ſelf-determination in men, as any with which the advocates for ſuch a power have combated the oppoſite opinion. This is an objection againſt the doctrine of a previous certainty of all events, frequently and repeatedly urged by our Author. (See p. 61, 82, 83, 84, 85, 124.) And he repreſents this doctrine as inferring a *neceſſity* as utterly inconſiſtent with all ideas of a praiſe-worthy or criminal action, as even *natural neceſſity*: a neceſſity inconſiſtent with the moral perfections of God, and making him "the almighty miniſter of *fate*." (See p. 81—2—3.) Here he diſſents from Dr. Clarke. The Doctor diſtinguiſheth between *natural* and *moral* neceſſity: this diſtinction our Author expreſsly denieth (p. 81.) And his argument (p. 61.) is founded on the ſame ſuppoſition. But upon the very ſuppoſition of an abſolute moral neceſſity, ſuch an one as inferreth as infallible a certainty as any natural neceſſity which can be conceived of, it is, that the Doctor founds his demonſtrative arguments of the moral attributes and perfections of God. He ſaith (p. 116. edit. 8.) that "'tis evident He (God) muſt

" of *neceſſity* do always what he knows to be *fitteſt to* " *be done.*" And in p. 118. he ſaith expreſsly, that the " moral attributes" (of the Deity) " are *really* " *and truly neceſſary*, by ſuch a neceſſity, as, though it " be not at all inconſiſtent with liberty, yet is equally " *certain*, *infallible*, and to be *depended upon*, as even " the exiſtence itſelf, or the eternity of God."

So the Doctor alloweth, that *moral neceſſity* is evidently conſiſtent with *natural liberty*; and, that it is *morally impoſſible* for a perſon, free from all pain and diſorder of body and mind, to endeavour to hurt himſelf; and ſaith expreſsly, that it is *morally impoſſible* for him to chooſe to do it. " Which alſo," continues he, " is the very ſame reaſon why the moſt perfect " rational creatures ſuperior to men *cannot do evil*: " not becauſe they want a *natural power* to perform " the material action; but becauſe it is *morally impoſ-* " *ſible*, that, with a perfect knowledge of what is beſt, " and without any temptation to evil, their will ſhould " determine itſelf to chooſe or act fooliſhly and unrea- " ſonably." (See p. 100 of his Demonſtration, &c. edit. 8.) How conſiſtent this is with a power of *ſelf-determination* in men, I leave to every one to judge. The ſame neceſſity is allowed by the Doctor, p. 68, 115, 117, &c. And he ſaith (p. 119.) that it is as abſolutely *impoſſible* for God to act contrary to his *moral* attributes, as to diveſt himſelf of his *natural* ones. And many of his arguments, and clear, juſt reaſonings, are founded upon the ſuppoſed conſiſtency of freedom and liberty with *moral neceſſity*.

And that the will of creatures ſhould be *neceſſarily determined* by ſomething out of itſelf, is ſo far from being inconſiſtent with praiſe-worthineſs and virtue, in the Doctor's view of things, that it is a certain proof of wickedneſs and vice, for the will not to be influenced and governed by ſomething *ab extra*. He ſaith (p. 186, 187, 188.) " And by this underſtand- " ing or knowledge of the natural relations and fitneſſ- " es of things, the *wills* likewiſe of intelligent beings

" are

" are *conſtantly directed, and muſt needs be determined*
" to act accordingly ; excepting thoſe only, who will
" things to be what they are not, and cannot be ; that
" is, whoſe wills are corrupted by particular intereſt
" or affection, or *ſwayed* by ſome unreaſonable and
" *prevailing paſſion*." Again, " For, originally and in
" reality, 'tis as *natural* and (morally ſpeaking) *neceſ-*
" *ſary*, that the will ſhould be *determined* in every ac-
" tion by the *reaſon* of things, and *the right of the caſe* ;
" as it is *natural* and, *abſolutely ſpeaking*, *neceſſary* that
" the underſtanding ſhould ſubmit to a *demonſtrated*
" *truth*." Here the Doctor certainly ſheweth himſelf a friend to the doctrine of *fate*, as far as this doctrine is implied in *moral neceſſity*, and a fixed, infallible certainty of all events ; however he may expreſs his diſinclination to it elſewhere.

If mankind would only diſtinguiſh carefully the ideas which they annex to the terms, *moral exerciſe* and *mechanical motion*, I cannot but think that the objection againſt a previous infallible certainty of all events, as well *moral*, as *natural*—that ſuch a doctrine ſuppoſeth men to be but mere machines, and all their internal exerciſes no other than mechanical motions—would loſe all its plauſibility with mankind, and appear utterly unworthy to fall from the pen of a philoſopher.

By *moral exerciſe* we mean that *affection of mind, of which we are conſcious in our views of moral things* : Or, whenever we feel either love or hatred, &c. in the view of any character, or moral truth ; then we put forth a *moral exerciſe*, and perform a *moral action*. This is the idea, which, I believe, is generally entertained of *moral exerciſe and action ;* and which needeth no farther explanation, as it is ſomething of which every one hath a conſciouſneſs within himſelf, and daily experienceth in his own breaſt.

On the other hand : *Mechanical motion* is that which, in the ſubject, is without either *will*, *conſciouſneſs*, *perception* or *deſign*. Whatever motion we behold, which appeareth to be utterly *involuntary* and *undeſigning*,

we conſider as altogether *mechanical*—a motion ariſing wholly from ſome external influence and operation; being *without the leaſt degree of voluntary inclination and deſign*. Thus we term the motions of the earth, and other bodies which compoſe the material ſyſtem, *mechanical*. And after the ſame manner do we ſpeak of the aſcending of vapours, the blowing of the winds, the motions of clocks, watches, &c. The effects which we behold in theſe natural bodies, we never conſider as the fruit of any voluntary intention, meditation or deſign, in the bodies themſelves which are the ſubjects of theſe viſible effects: but the changes and alterations which we obſerve in them, we conſider as the mere effects of ſome external influence and force. Theſe, it appears to me, are the ideas which men generally have of *moral exerciſes*, and of *mechanical motions*: ideas as diſtinct from each other, as *voluntary* and *involuntary*, *deſigning and undeſigned*.

If theſe definitions are juſt, can any thing be more unreaſonable than to conſider voluntary, deſigning agents, as but mere machines, becauſe there is an antecedent ground or reaſon of their mental exerciſes and volitions? When men are *agents* in any thing, is not this a ſufficient reaſon why they ſhould be praiſed or blamed, according as the action is either morally good or evil?—And that, even though there *was* an antecedent cauſe or reaſon of the action, in the operation and influence of which they themſelves, were not agents or active? Are men in any meaſure the leſs voluntary, active and deſigning, in their mental and moral exerciſes, becauſe of any antecedent ground or reaſon there may be of theſe their mental exerciſes, in the influence and operation of which reaſon, cauſe or ground, they themſelves are not deſigning and voluntary? As well might we ſay that the moral being *man*, becauſe for his exiſtence he is wholly dependent on God, and is entirely the workmanſhip of God, is but a mere machine. And if men are not the leſs voluntary by reaſon of any previous cauſe there is of their men-

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tal inclinations and exertions; why is the opinion that there is, in fact, an antecedent cauſe, ground and reaſon of all the voluntary exerciſes of men, in the operation and influence of which for the production of volition, mankind are not themſelves active and voluntary; exclaimed againſt as containing the heatheniſh, atheiſtical notion of fate, and making mankind, though curious, yet, but mere machines? * If the proper diſtinction between *moral exerciſes* and *mechanical motions*, is, that the former are voluntary and deſigning, the latter, without will and without deſign; then ſurely there is no foundation for the objection under conſideration; nor can any uſe be made of it, except in exclamation and popular harangues, and applications, not to the reaſon, but to the imaginations of men.

It hence appeareth that man may be called *an agent*, and juſtly be conſidered as the *doer* or *actor* of any thing, even though he is not the poſitive, efficient *cauſe* of his own voluntary exertion;—or though he is not *active* or *influential* in the operation of that *cauſe*, which hath for its *effect*, voluntary exertion:—And this with as much propriety as a man may be ſaid to *live* and *exiſt*, though he is in no degree the cauſe of his own life and exiſtence. This our Author alloweth; (p. 54.) but thinks his adverſary is neceſſarily entangled in this conſequence, that God is the poſitive cauſe and foundation of ſinful volition. He ſays, "if he" (man) "is only the *ſubject*, the *doer*, the *actor* of ſins—who "then is the *poſitive cauſe and fountain of it?*" The great objection, that God is the poſitive cauſe and fountain of wickedneſs, ſhall be conſidered in its proper place. ALL that is of importance to the inquiry immediately under conſideration, is, whether men are not criminal and blameworthy for *doing* and *acting* wickedneſs?

* Dr. Whitby on the five points exclaims loudly againſt the doctrine of an eſtabliſhed connexion in things, as containing the heatheniſh, atheiſtical doctrine of *fate*. See Diſcourſe 4. Chap. 4. throughout. And yet this ſame Author alloweth men to be *paſſive* in receiving ideas, and in having impreſſions made on their underſtandings. See p. 121, 122. 303. And very manifeſtly concedeth, yea urgeth a *connexion* of will with the views and dictates of the underſtanding. How far he is herein conſiſtent with himſelf, I leave the reader to judge.

wickedneſs? And whether, after it is conceded that, even upon ſuppoſition of a previous, infallible certainty of the volitions of men, they are the *doers* and *actors* of wickedneſs, there can be any reaſon or room for the objection, that the doctrine of ſuch an infallible previous certainty of all events, makes men but mere machines, and borders too much upon the atheiſtical notion of *fate*, to be entertained by Chriſtian divines? If it is once granted that it is criminal to be the *doers*, the *actors* of wickedneſs; the grand objection againſt the Calviniſtic doctrine reſpecting the divine decrees, predeſtination, &c. &c. that it makes men but mere machines, vaniſheth, and loſeth all its force: and the labouring point of debate will be, not the conſiſtency of moral liberty, with an eſtabliſhed connexion in things; but where the fountain and ſource is, of this previous certainty and eſtabliſhed connexion in things; and whether the *cauſe* of ſinful *action* is alſo itſelf ſinful.

But was it ever queſtioned by any one, whether the *doer*, the *actor* of wickedneſs, is deſerving of contempt and blame? Is it neceſſary that we ſhould be firſt infallibly determined reſpecting an antecedent certainty of our own wicked *deeds* and *actions*, before there can be any room—any rational ground for taking ſhame and blame to ourſelves? Do we ever wait to have this point made evident and plain, before we venture to cenſure and caſt blame upon others for the wickedneſs they *tranſact* and *commit*? Muſt it be evident beyond contradiction that man is the *fountain*, the *poſitive ſource* and *cauſe* from whence his evil volitions ariſe *as effects*, before we may venture to pronounce any one criminal and guilty? Nothing is more evident than that this is not agreeable to the common practice and univerſal cuſtom of men.

But, after all, if it were in fact the caſe, and could eaſily be made ſo to appear, that mankind are the *ſources*, the *poſitive cauſe* of their own voluntary exertions; this would, by no means, anſwer the objector's purpoſe;

poſe ; but would leave him ſtill involved in the ſame difficulty which, in his view, embarraſſeth the doctrine of a previous, infallible certainty of all events. For if man is the poſitive cauſe of his own acts of will, then, certainly, upon the objector's plan, acts of will are but mere effects ;—and ſuch, too, as are abſolutely and infallibly connected with their *poſitive* (and I might juſtly add) *involuntary cauſe* :—which certainly *revergeth* upon the obnoxious doctrine of fate.

Beſides, if man is the *deſigning* cauſe of his own volitions, it muſt doubtleſs be that he is ſo by a *voluntary* deſign ; and *this*, alſo, the effect of a *former* voluntary deſign, and ſo on, until we come to the volition which is original and firſt, without any going before it. And this firſt, original volition muſt be either an event without *any* cauſe ; or ariſe from ſome foreign, extrinſic cauſe ; which again, upon the objector's principles, introduceth the *gloomy*, *tyrannical* doctrine of fate. For volition to ariſe out of no cauſe whatſoever, and be an event for which there is abſolutely no reaſon and ground, is as inconſiſtent with liberty and freedom, as the opinion of an antecedent certainty of all events. For upon the objector's principles, it is neceſſary that volition ſhould ariſe out of a free cauſe. For volition to ariſe out of no cauſe, and thus be an event abſolutely unaccountable and for which no poſſible reaſon can be given, makes it as undeſigning and neceſſary, as the ſuppoſition of its abſolute, infallible connexion with ſome extrinſic cauſe. For it to ariſe out of *any cauſe*, as its effect, ſuppoſeth it, upon our Author's principles, to be a motion which is merely mechanical. But it being a maxim with the Ex—r, that there is no more in the effect than in its cauſe, to ſuppoſe that volition ariſeth out of man's voluntary deſign, as its cauſe, will make man himſelf but a mere machine. So that, even upon the objector's own principles, as truly as on ours, man, however curious, is yet but a mere machine.

There is no way, upon the principles of Gentlemen who

who urge ſuch objections as theſe, for any one to become really blame-worthy and criminal, unleſs he is the cauſe—the poſitive ſource and efficient author—of his own whole exiſtence : all dependency for life, being or exerciſe, involving in it the *abſurd*, *inconſiſtent doctrine of fate*. And it is indeed quite as conceivable, that a creature ſhould be the poſitive, voluntary, deſigning cauſe of his whole exiſtence, as of any part of it ; or, that a ſubject ſhould be the *cauſe* of its own accidents.

I think, therefore, while it is allowed, as it certainly muſt be, that, even upon the doctrine of a certain, eſtabliſhed connexion in things, men are *doers*—*actors* of wickedneſs ; and that they *exert* acts of will—*exerciſe* voluntary deſign ; there can be no weight in the objection, that, upon this hypotheſis, they are but mere machines. It muſt be manifeſt to every one, who will attentively conſider the matter, that we uſe the word *mechanical*, not to expreſs the connexion of any thing with ſome antecedent cauſe, ground or reaſon of its exiſtence ; but merely to note the quality of an effect, as being without voluntary intention and deſign. The word *mechanical* is not uſed to denote the *relation* of effect, but the *nature* and *quality* of it, as being without will and without deſign. So that although all events may equally ſuſtain the *relation* of effects, yet they are not all *mechanical* ; ſome being voluntary and deſigning ; others, without intention, or deſign.

If by FATE is meant a blind, undeſigning neceſſity of events ; every impartial, candid mind will eaſily diſcover the unreaſonableneſs of charging the doctrine of an antecedent, infallible certainty of all events, as ſavouring of the antient, heatheniſh opinion of fate. But if by the term, as uſed by modern divines, be meant nothing more than an *infallible*, *previous certainty* of every, even the moſt minute, event which ever taketh place in any part of the moral or natural ſyſtem, I am willing, for my own part, to allow myſelf

maintainer of the doctrine of fate* (though I greatly diſlike the term ;) and ſhall think myſelf ſufficiently kept in countenance by the greateſt philoſophers in all ages, as well heathen as chriſtian—by the moſt eminent divines in the early ages of the church—by the Aſſembly of Divines at Weſtminſter—and, finally, by the holy ſcriptures themſelves, which moſt fully and ſtrongly aſſert the unpopular doctrines of predeſtination, and the abſoluteneſs and univerſality of the divine decrees. *Theſe* are the doctrines which, there is abundant reaſon to think, are, at bottom, ſo diſguſtful and unpleaſing to men ; and which are meant to be ſecretly wounded by the hard names of *neceſſity* and *fate*.

SECT. VIII.

Wherein the Ex—r's reaſonings, in ſeveral parts of his performance which have not yet been taken notice of, are particularly conſidered.

THOUGH I am humbly of opinion that what Mr. Edwards hath ſaid directly upon the ſubject of *the government and determination of the will by motives*, is not *altogether* correct, but liable to *ſome* of the exceptions which the Ex—r hath taken againſt it ; ſtill,

* Mr. Leibnitz, in his fifth paper to Dr. Clarke, in anſwer to the Doctor's charge againſt him of maintaining the doctrine of *fate*, ſaith, "As to the notion of *fatality*, which the Author lays alſo to my charge, this is another ambiguity. There is a *fatum mahometanum*, a *fatum ſtoicum*, and a *fatum chriſtianum*. The *Turkiſh fate* will have an *effect* to happen, even though its *cauſe* ſhould be avoided ; as if there was an *abſolute neceſſity*. The *Stoical fate* will have a man to be quiet, *becauſe he muſt have patience, whether he will or not*, ſince it is impoſſible to reſiſt the courſe of things. But 'tis agreed that there is a *fatum chriſtianum*, a *certain deſtiny* of every thing, *regulated by the foreknowledge and providence of God*. *Fatum* is derived from *fari ;* that is, to *pronounce, to decree ;* and, in its right ſenſe, it ſignifies *the decree of providence*. And thoſe who ſubmit to it *through a knowledge of the divine perfections*, whereof the love of God is a conſequence, have not only patience, like the heathen philoſophers, but are alſo *contented* with what is ordained by God, knowing that he does every thing *for the beſt ;* and not only for the *greateſt good in general*, but alſo for the greateſt particular good of thoſe that love him." See *a Collection of papers which paſſed between Mr. Leibnitz and Dr. Clarke*, p. 163, 165.

it appears to me, he hath not treated that eminent Author, in many reſpects, with that juſtice and candour which diſtinguiſh the lovers of truth, and the upright and honeſt inquirers after it. I ſhall inſtance in a few particulars:

1. The Ex—r hath very particularly and expreſsly condemned him, as being in alliance, in ſentiment, with *fataliſts*, *epicurians* and *atheiſts*, becauſe he maintains the opinion of an abſolute previous certainty and infallible connexion in things, and expreſsly denieth a power of ſelf-determination in men; and yet has taken no notice of the arguments by which Mr. Edwards ſupporteth his own opinion, and refutes thoſe of his adverſary. It is remarkable, that, through our Author's whole performance, there is nothing ſaid to expoſe the ſophiſtry of the arguments which Mr. Edwards hath made uſe of in proof of an infallible antecedent certainty of all events, and ſhew the weakneſs and futility of them; and that his clear and very ſtriking reaſonings, againſt a power of ſelf-determination in men, are wholly paſſed over in ſilence. Herein, it appears to me, our Author hath done juſtice, neither to Mr. Edwards, nor to himſelf. Not to Mr. Edwards; in ſuppoſing that ſome incorrectneſs of expreſſion, or even ſentiment, reſpecting *the influence of motives upon the human will*, ſo to weaken the force of his arguments for the grand point in debate between the Calviniſts and Arminians, as to render them unworthy of any farther notice, or reply: Nor to *himſelf*, in not giving arguments, of ſuch peculiar perſpicuity and ſtrength, any greater weight in his own mind.

2. Our Author frequently aſſerts, that Mr. Edwards denieth *internal liberty*, or that the *will is free*. (See part 1. ſect. 3.) And ſaith, that it is contrary to the general doctrine of his book, that "the acts of the will are free." (See p. 67.) All that our Author can with juſtice found this charge againſt Mr. Edwards upon, is, his conſtantly denying, that acts of the will

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are to be considered as the *fruit of our own pleasure*; and, that *this* is a consideration necessary to either the virtuousness or viciousness of volitions. If by *free* is meant something which is the *fruit and consequence of the pleasure of the mind*, and that no act of the will is *free* unless it is the *effect of our own voluntary design*, Mr. Edwards did indeed deny internal freedom: but if by *free* is meant *voluntary* and *elective*, it will be obvious to any one, who shall take the trouble of attending to him, that he was very far from denying internal liberty and freedom. Such representations, by our Author, tend to give a wrong view and idea of the true and real sentiments of Mr. Edwards.

3. Our Author, I think, hath very maifestly perverted the meaning of the terms *natural* and *moral*, as applied to the abilities of men, from the sense in which Mr. Edwards obviously used them; and would from thence infer, that, even upon that Author's own principles, the latter, as truly as the former, is inconsistent with all ideas of virtue and vice, praise and blame. That Author, in part 1. sect. 4. of his book, hath explained the phrases *natural* and *moral inability*, with great clearness and exactness. The former, he represents as being inconsistent with blame; the latter, as in no degree removing the grounds of it. A *natural inability*, Mr. Edwards supposeth, implies resistance made to will and endeavours: a *moral* inability is nothing more than an indisposition of mind, a backwardness and strong aversion of will, to any exertion and endeavours. The former, he supposeth, precludes blame; the latter, not. He is careful, however, to remind his readers, that though, in conformity to the common use of terms among men, he giveth the name *moral* to one of these kinds of inability, he doth not suppose that *nature* is wholly unconcerned even in such a kind of inability as is generally termed *moral*; or, that there is not, extrinsic of the inability itself, a reason or ground of it, in the *nature* of things. In part 4. sect. 4. of his Inquiry, Mr. Edwards hath very

clearly ſhown the conſiſtency of *ſuch* an inability or neceſſity, as this, with our natural notions of *deſert*; even though *nature* is concerned in it; whatever may be the incongruity of attributing either praiſe or blame, where *natural* neceſſity (according to the common and moſt obvious meaning of the term) taketh place. Becauſe Mr. Edwards had ſaid, that the *nature of things* is concerned in moral neceſſity (p. 31.) and admits that *moral*, is a ſpecies of *philoſophical* neceſſity (p. 294.) the Ex—r pretends, that, upon Mr. Edwards's principles; and even *according to his own definitions*, there is a neceſſity in the volitions of men, which is utterly inconſiſtent with all our ideas of any deſert of either praiſe or blame. Herein the Ex—r doth not give the real, obvious ſenſe of the Author upon whom he animadverteth; but takes advantage, by varying the meaning of the term *nature* from the ſenſe in which Mr. Edwards uſeth it, to repreſent him as being inconſiſtent, both with himſelf and with common ſenſe, in an inſtance wherein, upon careful and candid examination, he will probably be found to be inconſiſtent with neither. Nothing farther need be ſaid in reply to the remarks of our Author on this head, than to requeſt the reader carefully to review Mr. Edwards's own reaſonings upon the point, in the fore-mentioned ſections.*

4. Mr.

* As ſome ſeem to think that Mr. Edwards uſes the diſtinction of *natural* and *moral inability* in an unuſual ſenſe, and have charged him with introducing a new phraſeology into the church, it may not be impertinent to quote a paſſage or two from Truman's Diſcourſe of natural and moral impotency, written about a century ago.

This diſtinction (ſays he) of *natural* and *moral power*, or *impotency*, is not uſed to affirm or deny the coming or ariſing of one or either of them from *nature*: for I am not now ſpeaking *de origine*, whence they ariſe; but to denote the ſpecies or kinds, and the eſſential difference of their nature, come they which way they will. That is a phyſical or natural habit or action, that is neither——laudable nor vituperable *in genere morum*; that a man can neither be counted good and honeſt, or bad and diſhoneſt, for his agility or comelineſs, dulneſs, blockiſhneſs, or acuteneſs; but may be (having ſuch power and doing accordingly) admired, though not praiſed; and for the defect of ſuch power may be pitied, but not blamed or puniſhed. And this impotency may be a puniſhment, but not a ſin. The moral and ethical act or habit is juſt contrary. It is that which is laudable or vituperable, and that which a man may be looked on as honeſt or diſhoneſt for. Now natural impotency is always, in this ſenſe, of ſomething that a man cannot do, if he would never ſo much; or hath not the very faculty of willing it.

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4. Mr. Edwards hath inſiſted, that the virtuouſneſs and viciouſneſs of diſpoſitions, habits of mind and inclinations, are to be ſought wholly in theſe diſpoſitions and inclinations themſelves; and not, in any meaſure, in their cauſe. This doctrine of Mr. Edwards, the Ex—r repreſenteth in ſuch a manner and in ſuch terms as greatly tend to betray unwary readers into very wrong and falſe apprehenſions of the real opinion and ſentiments of that eminent author. He ſays (p. 57.) "What doth it amount to? The plain "truth is" (on Mr. Edwards's principles) "that "when we ſet ourſelves to judge of human actions, "we muſt have no conſideration of the ſource of "them, but entirely detach them from their cauſes. "Be the efficient cauſe who or what it will, all we "have to attend to, is the effect produced—by this "we muſt eſtimate the goodneſs or wickedneſs of "men—!" The term *action*, is moſt commonly applied to *external*, *bodily exertions*. It is a dictate of common ſenſe, that, in judging of *actions*, in this ſenſe of the term, we muſt look wholly to their *ſource*, and by *this only* eſtimate the goodneſs or wickedneſs of men. Mr. Edwards is ſo far from having ſaid any thing inconſiſtent with this opinion, that he hath offered unanſwerable arguments in ſupport of it. And yet our Author hath expreſſed himſelf, on this head, in terms naturally adapted to perſuade his leſs accurate and judicious readers, that Mr. Edwards was ſo weak as to imagine that the commendableneſs or criminality of the outward actions of men do not at all depend upon

The *moral* impotency is of ſomething, that a man hath the natural faculty to will, or can do it if he would; but is hindered only by moral vicious habits from willing or doing it. (page 4.)

This *moral* impotency doth not excuſe from fault, or make the threatenings unjuſt. Nay, it is alſo in this contrary to natural (which I would have you obſerve and conſider well, to convince you of the great difference); that the natural impotency, the greater it is, by ſo much the more it doth leſſen the fault in not obeying the command; and the leſs it is, by ſo much the more it doth greaten the fault. But the greater it [moral impotency] is, the greater is the fault, and more blame-worthy, and farther from excuſe; and the leſs it is, the leſs faulty. (page 31.)

If any one deſires to know whether Mr. Edwards's language is new, and before unknown to the church, let him read this whole diſcourſe of Truman.

upon the internal purpoſes and deſigns from which the actions proceed. In this inſtance our Author, I apprehend, evadeth the force of Mr. Edwards's argument; and hardly ſhews himſelf the candid, fair inquirer.

But will the Ex—r inſiſt on the conſequence which he ſuppoſeth to follow from theſe principles of Mr. Edwards? He ſays, "He, *therefore*, that with one "original talent makes as great improvement as another with five, is no more praiſeworthy—that is, "is not *accepted according to that he hath*. He that "offends againſt five degrees of light, originally given, is guilty in no higher degree than he who offends "againſt but one degree of light." I know not by what rule of reaſon our Author makes this inference. If the viciouſneſs of any thing lieth in the nature of it, not in its cauſe; is this a conſideration, that at all diminiſheth the difference between rebellion againſt different degrees of light? Will our Author inſiſt, alſo, that the *difference* between things actually exiſting, conſiſteth not in the *nature* of the things themſelves, but in their *cauſe*? There is nothing whereby we can determine the ſtrength of any internal diſpoſition, but by the degrees of difficulty it will overcome, or light againſt which it will rebel. If it requires greater ſtrength of inclination and diſpoſition to reſiſt five degrees of light, than to reſiſt one, there is certainly a higher degree of wickedneſs in reſiſting five, than in reſiſting one; *eſpecially* if the wickedneſs lieth in the *nature* of the diſpoſition *exerciſed*, and not in its *cauſe*.

5. Our Author pretendeth to quote Mr. Edwards, as aſſerting that "moral evil is not of *a bad, but good* "*tendency*." (p. 72.) For this he referreth his readers to part 4. ſect. 9. of that Author's Inquiry. I have carefully examined that ſection, and can find no ſuch aſſertion in it, or any thing akin to it. Mr. Edwards acknowledgeth, that, upon his principles, it muſt be granted, that the taking place of ſin is a fruit and

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effect of the divine permiſſion and diſpoſal. And to ſhew that this permiſſion and diſpoſal of divine providence are not inconſiſtent with the divine purity and holineſs, and do not reflect upon the moral character of God, he aſſerts that there is *no bad tendency* in ſuch permiſſion and diſpoſal. He ſaith (p. 375.) "'Tis "not of a *bad tendency*, for the ſupreme Being thus "to order and permit that moral evil to be, which it "is beſt ſhould come to paſs." This, any one may ſee, is a very different thing from ſaying that "*moral* "*evil* is not of a bad, but good tendency." In this pretended quotation there is at leaſt the appearance of diſingenuity and unfairneſs. If our Author had carefully attended to the evident deſign and ſcope of the ſection upon which he is here remarking, I think he could not poſſibly have made ſo palpable a miſtake. And by this means he might have ſpared himſelf the trouble of ſeveral of the next ſucceeding pages; and, of his pathetic exclamation on the ſuppoſed advantages of the moſt atrocious crimes that are committed here in our world, and the "baſe ingratitude" of mankind to theſe "their greateſt benefactors."

6. Another inſtance wherein our Author, I apprehend, hath miſrepreſented the ſentiments of Mr. Edwards, is, his charging him with placing the criminality and wickedneſs of a number and ſeries of bad volitions *particularly* in that which is firſt and original in the ſeries, on account of the inſeparable connexion of all the ſucceeding ones, in the train, with it. This is the light in which our Author repreſenteth him. (p. 48. 97.) For this ſentiment in Mr. Edwards, he referreth his readers to p. 48. 224, 225. 266. 70, 71. Mr. Edwards indeed ſaith (p. 48.) "If the firſt act of "the will, which determines and fixes the ſubſequent "acts, be not free, none of the following acts, which "are determined by it, are free." But by *free*, as he here uſeth the term, he manifeſtly intends the ſame as *ſelf-determined*: and, by the chain of reaſoning which he is here purſuing, would ſhew the inconſiſtency of

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men with themſelves, even on their own principles, in pleading for a power of ſelf-determination, as eſſential to moral liberty, virtue and vice; and, that, according to their own definitions, it is utterly inconceivable that any act or exerciſe of the will ſhould be free. Mr. Edwards, in p. 224. inſiſts that the firſt and determining act, in a ſeries and chain of volitions, is as truly the ſubject of command, as the conſequent ones. And likewiſe tells us, that "'tis this *more eſpecially* "which is that which the command or precept has a "proper reſpect to; becauſe it is this act which deter-"mines the whole affair; in this act the obedience or "diſobedience lies in a more peculiar manner." To me, indeed, there appeareth no reaſon for ſuch a repreſentation as this; nor any ground for ſuppoſing the *firſt volition*, in any ſeries or train of acts of the will, to be in a more peculiar manner the ſubject of command, than any of the ſubſequent ones. Yea, the reverſe of this, in many caſes, is moſt manifeſtly true. For, in a chain and ſeries of volitions and exerciſes terminating on the ſame general object, the mind frequently exerteth itſelf with more ſtrength and vigour in its ſubſequent exerciſes, than in that which is original and firſt in the ſeries; and which may, in ſome ſenſe, be ſaid to determine the reſt. Certainly, it is not conſiſtent with this Author's own principles, to ſuppoſe that the *connexion* of ſubſequent acts of the will, with that which is firſt and original in the ſeries, or the determination of the conſequent acts by the antecedent, ſhould be any reaſon for making the firſt *eſpecially* the ſubject of precept and command; or, for placing obedience or diſobedience *in a peculiar manner* in the firſt, and not in thoſe which follow it.

But in the other places referred to by our Author, it is manifeſt that when Mr. Edwards denieth freedom to be in conſequent acts of the will, *becauſe of their connexion with foregoing acts*, he doth it only upon the objector's principles, in order to ſhew him his own inconſiſtency. If our Author had carefully kept Mr.

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Edwards's design in view, he would not have repre-
ented him as so frequently placing the criminality and
wickedness of a number and chain of volitions *parti-*
ularly and especially in that which is first and original
n the series.

7. On the strength of the supposition, that every
kind of necessity is equally inconsistent with our natu-
al ideas of desert, of praise and blame, our Author
hargeth Mr. Edwards (p. 83.) with being "caught
n his own subtilty," and inadvertently sliding into
he doctrine of fatalism, however he may have expres-
ed his disinclination to it. What the Ex—r meaneth
by *fatalism*, it is sufficiently evident, is not the neces-
sary certainty of the divine existence and exercises,
but the subjection of every event, yea of all intelligent
existence, in every form and mode of it, to a necessity
which is equally without will, without wisdom, and
without design. "Upon this scheme" (Mr. Edwards's)
saith our Author, "it follows, that the actions of all
"finite beings are the agency of the Deity; and his,
"not, properly speaking, *agency*, but instrumentali-
"ty—a subjection to blind necessity and fate."—Mr.
Edwards hath no where said or intimated, that the
divine agency is the *fruit* and *effect* of any extrinsic,
necessary cause; or, indeed, of any kind of necessity
whatsoever: and where the Ex—r finds such a senti-
ment or conclusion contained in any thing that Author
hath said in his Inquiry, I am at a loss to conceive. It
s true, that Mr. Edwards supposeth the divine exist-
nce, even in every mode and manner of it, a *necessary*
existence. If this is a doctrine "plainly on the side
f fatality," we readily allow that his reasonings are
n that side of the question. And if there is no way
o escape the subtilties of that obnoxious doctrine, be-
de that of denying the *necessity* of the divine existence,
t will at once be admitted that Mr. Edwards was
aught in them. But would our Author, in order to
void the doctrine of fate, deny the *absolute necessity* of
he divine existence—a necessity taking place equally

in reſpect to the *exerciſes* as of the very *exiſtence* of God? Is this the ſort of fatality which our Author ſo ſtudiouſly avoideth, and at which he diſcovers ſo great a diſguſt? If this is the caſe, the Ex—r's words reſpecting Mr. Edwards (p. 83.) with a little variation may juſtly be applied to himſelf. "However" our Author "hath expoſed his diſinclination to" atheiſm "(in which we doubt not his ſincerity) we think his "reaſoning is plainly on the ſide of" *it*; "and ſuppoſe he was caught in his own ſubtilty." For if the divine exiſtence and volition are not *neceſſarily what they are*; and if there is not that ſupremacy, efficiency and power in him and in his government, as abſolutely to *inſure* the taking place of *every event*, under this government, exactly agreeable to the wiſe purpoſe and deſign of God; it will be no longer worth while for *chriſtian divines* to conteſt any points with *atheiſts* and *infidels*; or, even to expect any *effectual* interpoſition in favour of the cauſe of righteouſneſs and truth.

Upon the authority, notwithſtanding, of Mr. Edwards's maintaining ſuch a doctrine as this, our Author, with great freedom, ranks this eminent *chriſtian divine*, with *heathen philoſophers* and others who, he ſuppoſeth, harmonize with them in their doctrine of fate. And accordingly he hath, in the cloſe of his performance, drawn a parallel between the ſentiments of Mr. Edwards, and the doctrines of ſuch as he imagineth have been abettors of thoſe heatheniſh, unphiloſophical tenets. He informs us, indeed (p. 130.) that he doth not ſuppoſe that the agreement of Mr. Edwards's doctrines with the ſentiments of heathen philoſophers proves them to be falſe. But if it was not his deſign that the conſideration of the correſpondence of Mr. Edwards's doctrine, with ſome things which are to be found in the writings of Hobbs, Spinoza, &c. ſhould have *the weight* of an argument, with his more ſuperficial readers; it is difficult to find a reaſon why he exhibited this reſemblance to the view of the publick, and ſubjoined his "ſpecimen of coincidence"

cidence" to his other performance. This *is* an argument which will probably be of greater weight with many, to prejudice them againſt the writings of this truly great and excellent divine, than any or all the other arguments our Author hath advanced in his whole book. Nor is it eaſy to ſee what other end he would have in view, in comparing the doctrines and ſentiments of Mr. Edwards, with ſome things which are to be found in the writings of ſuch as have obtained the name of *fataliſts*, in ſome part of the chriſtian world, than to raiſe the popular cry againſt Mr. Edwards, and caſt an odium, both upon his ſentiments and character. It might have been much more ſatisfying to the candid, honeſt inquirers after truth, for our Author fairly to have anſwered and confuted the arguments, both of Mr. Edwards and thoſe with whom he coincideth in ſentiment, in favour of that kind of neceſſity of events which is urged with ſo much (at leaſt) *appearance* of reaſon and argumentation by thoſe learned writers; which, however, hath, among ſome, obtained the obnoxious and unpopular name of *fate*. It will, probably, upon inquiry, be found that the advocates for *free will*, or they who aſſert ſuch a liberty of will as implieth *a freedom from all kinds of neceſſity*, cannot ſupport their opinion by more authorities, or thoſe of greater eminence and weight among both Heathens, Jews, and Chriſtians, than are evidently on the ſide of *neceſſity*, and have ſtrenuouſly ſupported it. The Author of the *philoſophical inquiry concerning human liberty*, ſuppoſed to be A. Collins, Eſq. ſays, that liberty (meaning that freedom from all neceſſity which implies contingency of events) can only be grounded on the abſurd principles of *Epicurean* Atheiſts; and that "The *Epicurean Atheiſts*, who were the moſt 'popular and moſt numerous ſect of atheiſts of anti-'quity, were the great aſſertors of liberty." As authorities for this aſſertion, he quotes *Lucretius* and *Euſ.* and then proceeds to inform us, that the *Stoicks*, 'who were the moſt popular and moſt numerous ſect

" among the religionaries of antiquity, were the great
" aſſertors of——neceſſity." His authority for this aſ-
ſertion is Cicero de nat. Deor. L. I. " The caſe,"
continues he, " was alſo the ſame among the Jews,
" as among the Heathen.——They were principally
" divided into three ſects, the Sadducees, the Phariſees,
" and the Eſſenes. The Sadducees, who were eſteem-
" ed an irreligious and atheiſtical ſect, maintained the
" *liberty of man.*" (By *liberty* is here meant that
ſame *freedom of will* which is termed, both by our
Author and others, a *ſelf-moving, ſelf-determining pow-
er.*) " But the Phariſees, who were a religious ſect,
" aſcribed all things to *fate*, or *God's appointment*,"
(by which this writer meaneth one and the ſame thing)
" and it was the firſt article of their creed, that *fate*
" and *God* do all; and conſequently they could not
" aſſert true liberty, when they aſſerted a liberty to-
" gether with this *fatality* and neceſſity of all things.
" And the Eſſenes, who were the moſt religious ſect
" among the Jews, and fell not under the cenſure of
" our Saviour for their hypocriſy, as the Phariſees
" did, were aſſertors of abſolute fate and neceſſity.
" St. Paul, who was a Phariſee and the ſon of a Phari-
" ſee, is ſuppoſed by the learned Dodwell to have re-
" ceived his doctrine of fate, &c. &c. So that liber-
" ty is both the real foundation of popular atheiſm,
" and has been the profeſſed principle of the atheiſts
" themſelves; as, on the other ſide, *fate* or *the neceſſi-
" ty* of events, has been eſteemed a religious opinion,
" and been the profeſſed principle of the religious,
" both among Heathens and Jews, and alſo of that
" great convert to chriſtianity, and great converter of
" others, St. PAUL." (See p. 54, 55, 56. of his In-
quiry.) The ſame writer tells us (p. 192.) that
" The queſtions of *liberty*, *neceſſity* and *chance* have
" been ſubjects of diſpute among philoſophers at all
" times; and moſt of theſe philoſophers have clearly
" aſſerted neceſſity, and denied liberty and chance.
" That " The queſtions of *liberty* and *neceſſity* have

alſo

" alſo been debated among divines, in the ſeveral ages " of the chriſtian church, under the terms of *free will* " and *predeſtination*: and the divines who have denied " *free will* and aſſerted *predeſtination*, have enforced " the arguments of the philoſopher, by the conſidera- " tion of ſome doctrines peculiar to the chriſtian reli- " gion." This writer likewiſe quotes Dr. Clarke, in what he ſaith upon the *being* and *attributes* of God, as evidently eſpouſing the doctrine of neceſſity (ſee p. 94.); to which the Doctor made a particular reply; printed with " A collection of papers which paſſed " between the late learned Mr. Leibnitz" and the Doctor.

No weight, however, is, after all, to be laid on ſuch authorities: there being ſcarcely any opinion, however ridiculous or abſurd, but what may be ſupported by authorities both ancient and modern, as well chriſtian as heathen.

But as to the reaſonableneſs of founding any argument, either of the truth or falſhood of any opinion whatever, merely upon its correſpondence with *ſome things* which have been advanced, either by the friends, or enemies, of chriſtianity; I ſhall only beg leave to refer the reader to what Mr. Edwards himſelf hath ſaid upon this ſubject, in Part IV. Sect. 6. of his Inquiry. If our Author had kept this in view, I cannot but think he muſt have felt himſelf to be engaged in a very fruitleſs (not to ſay invidious) employment, while he was preparing his " Specimen of coincidence" for the view of the public.

Beſide the injuſtice done by the Ex—r particularly to Mr. Edwards, many of his obſervations and reaſonings, it to me appeareth, are injurious to the cauſe of truth. Some few inſtances of unjuſt argumentation, and of concluſions (I am humbly of opinion, precipitantly drawn) it may not be improper to mention, in the preſent ſection.

Mr. Edwards uſeth the terms *voluntary*, *free* and *elective*, when applied to the internal exerciſes of men, in

in nearly one and the ſame ſenſe ; and in many of his reaſonings they are convertible terms. Our Author, that he might evince the terms *free* and *voluntary*, when applied to moral actions, to be of very different import ; and make it appear that, for an action to be *voluntary* is no proof that it is either virtuous or vicious ; endeavoureth to make it manifeſt that Mr. Edwards's definition of a *moral action*, viz. that it is *voluntary*, includes, not only the actions of men, but alſo, thoſe of the brute creation. And however diſſonant it may be from the dictates of the common ſenſe of men, to imagine that the actions of brutes fall under any moral denomination ; yet, that by the help of metaphyſicks, we may, in time, bring our minds to comport with ſuch an uſe of language and terms, ſee p. 89, 90. If the Ex—r had reflected, that there is, every way, as much evidence that the brute creation correſpond with mankind in that quality of their nature, that *their actions are ſelf-determined*, as in this, that they are *voluntary* ; I cannot but think he would have omitted this obſervation. For him to ſay, that a power of *ſelf-determination* is what dignifieth man above the brutes, and is that which forms the grand diſtinction between *moral* and *animal* nature, is altogether without authority and proof. For when he has proved that mankind are inveſted with ſuch uncommon powers, and that ſuch a power is neceſſary to the morality of their actions, we ſhall be equally authorized to ſay, that *his* definition includeth the actions of the brutal part of the creation, as he now is, to raiſe ſuch an objection againſt the definition adopted by us. For he ſhould remember, that, *upon his principles*, there is no more evidence that the actions of brutes are *voluntary*, than that they are *ſelf-determined:* and when he hath given a diſtinction of human volitions from thoſe of the brute creation, whereby it will appear that the latter cannot be ſelf-determined, though the former are ; *his* metaphyſicks will, probably, have furniſhed *us* with a diſtinction between the *voluntary*

exerciſes

exercises of mankind, and those of the lower creation; whereby we shall be able to make it appear, that the former are of a moral denomination, though the latter are not.

Our Author, in opposition, as he seemeth to suppose, to Mr. Edwards, strenuously pleads for *internal* liberty; by which he evidently meaneth a power of self-determination. (See Part III. Sect. II. and p. 88. 92. 97, 98, 99.) Several arguments which he hath made use of in proof of such a liberty as this in men, it may be proper to examine in these remarks.

1. The Ex—r would gather some proof of that kind of liberty, which he supposeth to be essential to the morality of action, from the consideration of our being placed upon trial, and in a state of probation. (See p. 99.) If he had particularly given the ideas necessarily included under the terms *being upon trial*, it would have been more easily discoverable whether there is any weight in the argument; but as he hath not, there is no evidence that the conclusion is just. For my own part, I must confess that I know of no other idea conveyed by the expression, than that of *having some future reward, or punishment, suspended upon our present conduct*. What the *disposition* of the creature is respecting the proposed reward, if he be but an intelligent, voluntary agent, doth not, that I am sensible, come at all under consideration, in determining and fixing the idea of being upon trial. After angels and men had sinned, it pleased God to make a proposal of mercy to the latter; though he passed by the former. This proposal, from the Deity, brought man into a state of trial; as it again suspended his future felicity, upon his present conduct. Merely the proposal, however, did not in the least abate man's natural enmity against God, and his opposition to him; or excite any disposition or inclination to a compliance with proposals *of such a nature, and made upon such terms*. To the fallen angels, no proposals of mercy were ever made; their state being forever decided,

and

and they fixed in a ſtate of hopeleſs, remedileſs ruin, by their original ſin and apoſtacy. Their future ſtate being abſolutely and unchangeably decided by what is already paſſed, and what it is impoſſible to recall, they are not upon trial; it being infinitely impoſſible they ſhould ever do any thing in the leaſt degree to alter and change the deciſions already made and eſtabliſhed, reſpecting their eternal excluſion from the preſence and favour of God. But if it ſhould pleaſe God now to enter into a treaty of peace with them, and make propoſals of pardon and mercy, upon terms with which nothing would prevent a compliance, but their proud and haughty tempers; this would, at once, put them upon a ſtate of probation and trial; and that, even though there was not the leaſt abatement of their oppoſition and malice of heart againſt God. Such a propoſal to them would be truly ſuſpending their *future* ſtate upon their *preſent* conduct; which, as I apprehend, is the principal thing intended and implied in *being upon trial*. And if this is a proper definition of a ſtate of trial, it is eaſy to ſee that it doth not imply a power of ſelf-determination. If the idea of a ſtate of trial is nothing more than one being in a ſtate of exiſtence wherein our future happineſs, or miſery, is ſuſpended upon our preſent exerciſes and conduct; then this conſideration affordeth not the leaſt argument in ſupport of our Author's hypotheſis reſpecting the powers which are eſſential to the rewardableneſs, or puniſhableneſs, of actions. Or if it ſhould be inſiſted that *trial* neceſſarily includeth the idea of ſomething fitted and adapted to be a proper means of diſcovering the *ſelf-denial* of creatures, and making manifeſt the ſtrength of affection there is in them toward God; ſtill this would make nothing in favour of the power in queſtion. If the conſideration of our being upon trial affords any pretext for ſuppoſing that mankind are inveſted with the powers in queſtion; it can be only on the ſuppoſition that ſuch actions alone as are ſelf-originated, and ſelf-moved, and do not ariſe from the

influence of any extrinsic cause, are, with propriety and equity, either rewardable or punishable.

But if this is the idea our Author designs to convey, by representing it as inconsistent with a *state of trial* to suppose that those actions and exercises, upon which, either a reward, or a punishment, is suspended, should arise from any thing out of the mind as their cause; he hath made no advances in his argument; it is barely a repetition of the old objection, under a new form.

It is very evident that nothing can be inferred, in proof of the necessity of the powers in question, in order to the commendableness, or criminality, of actions, merely from the consideration of our *being upon trial*. If actions may be commendable or criminal in beings who are not upon trial, then the *consideration of our being upon trial* determineth nothing, either the one way or the other, respecting the powers which are necessary in order to the praise-worthiness or criminality of actions.*

There are not many, probably, who will expressly deny that the actions and exercises of angels in heaven, and of the devils in hell, are, the one as truly commendable, and the other, criminal; as any actions or exercises that ever were or will be performed by men in a state of trial. And if actions may be commendable and criminal in beings who are not in a state of trial; then, of consequence, *our being upon trial*, affordeth no argument of the necessity of our being endowed with the powers in question, *in order to our being justly and equitably rewardable or punishable for our actions*. Merely *being on trial*, rendereth no other power requisite to the commendableness or criminality of actions; than are necessary to the same purpose, in beings who are *not* upon trial. Being upon trial,

 therefore,

* Dr. Whitby greatly insisteth, that a power of self-determination is essential to a state of trial; (see p. 299 300. 309. 408. &c.) and yet concedeth that the exercises of *angels* are praise-worthy and virtuous; and of *devils*, vicious and sinful. But seeing that they are necessary, he denieth them to be, the one *rewardable*, the other *punishable*." But if the Doctor had considered that the actions of our Saviour, while upon earth, were in a proper sense *rewardable*; he would probably have seen the inconclusiveness of his own argument.

therefore, argueth no enlargement of powers, beyond what beings are endowed with, who are not upon trial. And if the actions of thoſe who are ſo confirmed in a ſtate, either of holineſs and happineſs, or of ſin and miſery, as implieth a moral inability and impoſſibility of change; are nevertheleſs, the one commendable, and the other, criminal; the conſequence is obvious that ſuch an inability doth not deſtroy, or take away, the moral quality of actions; or hinder but that, this notwithſtanding, they may be either virtuous or vicious, and have proper deſert of reward or puniſhment.

2. Another argument advanced by our Author, in proof of ſuch a power of action in man as implieth ſelf-determination, is drawn from the conſideration of the uſe of the means of grace with the unregenerate, and the offer made to thoſe of that character, in the goſpel. (See part III. ſec. II.) He ſays, p. 111. that "Means are uſed with unregenerate ſinners:" and on the next page, that "to ſpeak of means, and deny their conduciveneſs to the end, is an affront to common ſenſe."—That it would be impeaching ſupreme wiſdom and goodneſs, to ſay that they "are not calculated *in the beſt manner to lead ſinners unto repentance*." And he aſſerteth, p. 144. that to ſay, "the "unregenerate have not *a moral power* to uſe the "means of grace, is the ſame abſurdity as to ſay, the "means have no tendency to the end." The Ex—r's argument, if I rightly apprehend him, is to this effect, viz. That God treateth with unregenerate ſinners as moral agents, capable of being influenced by moral motives—by reaſon;—that he offereth pardon and mercy to them upon condition of repentance—that he inſtructs them ſufficiently into the nature of true repentance—and by the ſtrongeſt and moſt perſuaſive reaſons and motives, urgeth and preſſeth the duty upon unregenerate ſinners: *therefore* unregenerate ſinners are not under that *moral inability* which excludeth that liberty and freedom which imply a power of ſelf-determination

termination. This argument of our Author's, I think, by no means concludeth in favour of a power of self-determination. For,

1. That very conduciveneſs which he ſuppoſeth there is, in the means of grace, to bring ſinners to repentance; is in direct oppoſition to the power in queſtion. Means are *outward*, *external* things, deſigned and fitted to *bias* and *influence* the mind; and, upon our Author's principles, "calculated in the beſt manner"—not to unfetter and unſhackle the mind from the power and influence of external cauſes, but to bring it *under their influence*; in order that its choice might be by that influence, directed to *one certain particular* object in diſtinction from all others. And this, according to our Author, is not only the deſign and tendency of the means themſelves, but alſo of all thoſe divine aids and aſſiſtances vouchſafed to ſinners in the uſe of them. Now that there muſt be ſuch a variety of *means* uſed with ſinners, in order to bring them to repentance; and theſe calculated, adjuſted and adapted, by *ſupreme wiſdom*, to this very purpoſe; yea, and more than all this, the aids of *divine grace itſelf* accompanying them; and, after all, theſe, many times, proving ineffectual: ſurely are conſiderations which are far from arguing any thing in favour of ſuch an internal liberty, as implieth a power of *ſelf-determination*; but rather prove the mind to be under ſome ſtrong, powerful and prevailing influence *in oppoſition* to the liberty and power in queſtion.

2. Our Author conſidereth it as an abſurd thing, to ſay that the means of grace have no tendency to bring men unto repentance. He thinks that the queſtion concerning the tendency of means, with the unregenerate, to the end, is ſo obvious and plain, that the very propoſing of it is enough. (See p. 112.) And he ſpeaks of theſe means as being, through the divine concurrence with them, *efficacious*. How this conſideration can be an argument in favour of a power of *ſelf-determination*, I can by no means comprehend. For what-

ever choice of mind, or act of will, taketh place under the influence of *external causes*, is so far from being *self-determined*, that it is determined by something wholly and entirely out of itself. As far as the means of grace, together with the divine aids which accompany them, have a *tendency* to bring sinners to repentance; so far they have a tendency to *produce* such an effect in, or upon, the mind of a sinner. And as far as these means, with the divine aids accompanying them, have a tendency in them to produce such effects in the sinner's mind; so far this effect, in the mind of a sinner, ariseth from the *influence* of these means and the divine aids. But these means and aids being *external* things (I mean extrinsic of the mind itself) as far as the acts and exercises of the mind are under their influence; so far the acts of the mind are *determined* by something from without; and, therefore, not *self-determined*; and so, in our Author's sense, not free.

Not only is this argument impertinent to the Author's purpose; but it is inconsistent with itself, and with other things frequently allowed in his book.

1. The Ex—r often concedes that mankind are in a fallen and depraved state. He says, (p. 61, 62.) "Admitting that such a state of the will may be required as is forever *impossible*; this can be only on "a supposition of a power once given and possessed, "but lost." And (p. 105.) "However great that "*impotency* is which is derived from Adam, there is a "manifest difference between a *moral inability*, or necessity, derived from *the fall* of man, and a like kind "of inability or necessity, *original* to the human race." And farther, "While we acknowledge the *fallen state* "*of our nature*, and the *impotency* derived from the "fall, the proper question, on the gospel plan, is, whether salvation is offered to sinners on *practicable* "terms." And, p. 108. he speaks of means which are used with sinners as being *sufficient*.

2. Our Author is careful to let his readers know, that though he pleads for a power in the unregenerate

to

to embrace goſpel offers, he doth not mean excluſive of the bleſſing and grace of God. He ſaith (p. 105.) "The preſent queſtion is not, whether fallen man hath "a power, *independently of the aids of grace*, to accept "the goſpel propoſal." So (p. 114.) "We repeat "it, to prevent miſtakes, that when we ſpeak of the "ability of unregenerate men, to uſe the means of "grace, we mean not *independent power* in themſelves: "(this the regenerate have not.")

To allow any impotency in human nature—any moral inability derived from the fall of Adam—is not conſiſtent with that internal liberty, that power of ſelf-motion, ſelf-determination, which, in our Author's view, is eſſential to the morality of action. The terms, *impotency*, *moral inability*, &c. when applied to men, if they have any meaning in them, muſt intend ſome weakneſs and imbecility of mind, ſome unaptneſs to its proper acts and exerciſes; together with ſome kind of proneneſs and bias—ſome preponderating tendency, in the ſtate and circumſtances of things, either internal, or external, or both—to that ſin and wickedneſs which muſt finally iſſue in our eternal ruin. The terms muſt certainly denote a weakneſs, corruption and depravity of mind, which render the ſinner's recovery leſs likely, and more difficult; and which, likewiſe, make more and greater means, and more powerful aids of divine grace, neceſſary to effect the ſalvation of the ſinner, and prevent his final and everlaſting deſtruction. All ſuch kind of *inability* and *impotency*, as far as they prevail, are utterly inconſiſtent with that internal liberty—that power of ſelf-motion, ſelf-determination—which, in the ſenſe of the Ex—r, is eſſential to the morality of action.

To aſſert that ſalvation is offered to ſinners on *practicable* terms (in the ſenſe wherein our Author evidently uſeth the word) and that ſuch means are uſed with ſinners as are *ſufficient* for this purpoſe, is inconſiſtent with all ideas of any impotency and inability derived to us by the fall of Adam. For it is aſſerted (p. 81.)

that

that notwithſtanding all Mr. Edwards hath ſaid to the contrary, *natural* and *moral* power are the ſame. He furthermore tells us (part III. ſect. II.) that there are means inſtituted for the recovery of ſinners, which have a *conduciveneſs* and *tendency* to that end; and which are *calculated in the beſt manner, by* SUPREME WISDOM, *to lead ſinners unto repentance*:—that *divine aids* are vouchſafed to render theſe means effectual; and that ſinners have a *moral power* to uſe the means of grace.

What ſort of an inability and impotency, with reſpect to doing that duty and complying with thoſe terms, which are the condition upon which eternal life is to be beſtowed, *they* can be under, who have *ſuch excellent means* for attaining it; *divine aids* and *grace* afforded and vouchſafed for making theſe means *effectual*; a *moral power* to uſe theſe means, in themſelves ſo conducive to the end; and, finally, nothing required but what is *practicable*—both *morally* and *naturally* ſo: I ſay, what ſort of inability or impotency mankind can be under, in reſpect of an end ſo every way attainable; and duty ſo, in every ſenſe, practicable; is, to me, quite inconceivable.

There is much reaſon to think that our Author entirely excludeth the ideas of criminality and ſinfulneſs, from that impotency and inability which he ſuppoſeth are derived to mankind, from the fall of Adam. For the power, it ſeems, which the unregenerate have to uſe the means of grace, is as plenary and extenſive as is conſiſtent with a ſtate of dependence on God. To this purpoſe our Author tells us (p. 114.) and that with much care and caution, leſt it ſhould be imagined that he denied the dependence of *unregenerate ſinners* on God, "We repeat it, to prevent miſtakes, that "when we ſpeak of the ability of unregenerate men "to uſe the means of grace, we mean not *independent* "*power* in themſelves: this the regenerate have not." But notwithſtanding his care to prevent miſtakes reſpecting the *dependence* of unregenerate ſinners on God;

God; his readers will, perhaps, not *miſtake his real ſentiment*, if they ſhould imagine that he ſuppoſeth *unregenerate* ſinners have as full a power, to all intents and purpoſes, to do every thing that is really required of them, in their preſent *weak* ſtate, as the regenerate have; or, even the Angels of God in heaven. For our Author expreſsly denieth (p. 116.) "that *any* "are commanded, invited, exhorted, &c. to exert "powers and faculties they are not poſſeſſed of—to "act from principles they are not endowed with." And ſaith, that it "cannot be propoſed that the un-"regenerate ſhould act from the higheſt ſpiritual "principles." Here our Author hath ſufficiently hinted his opinion, that there is no impotency or inability in human nature to any thing which, in our preſent ſtate, is required of us; no weakneſs or inability that is criminal and vicious in the ſight of God.

Thus our Author alloweth an *impotency* and *inability* derived from Adam; and yet inſiſts that nothing can juſtly be required of mankind, but what they have a *moral*, as well as *natural*, power to perform; and that they cannot be "commanded—to act from principles they are not endowed with." He ſpeaks of means being uſed with ſinners, to bring them to *repentance*; and yet giveth ſuch a view of their powers and character, and of the requiſitions which alone can juſtly be made upon them, as precludeth all neceſſity of repentance, and leaveth nothing for which any one can properly be called to repent. For *natural inability* is, on all hands, allowed to preclude blame: and yet, after allowing the *fallen ſtate* of human nature, and the *impotency* of mankind, he inſiſteth, that "if the "incapacity be *real*, it is no matter under what name "it goes:—that the diſtinction between *natural* and "*moral* is nothing to the purpoſe." (p. 115.) He admits, "that ſuch a ſtate of the will may be required as is forever impoſſible." (p. 61, 62.) Yet inſiſteth, that mankind cannot be required "to act from principles they are not endowed with;" (ſee p. 116.)

and,

and, on the preceding page, challengeth any one to ſhew, that, upon any other ſuppoſition, the goſpel can be a privilege, or men liable to a greater damnation for abuſing it.

Our Author urgeth the *conduciveneſs* of the means of grace to bring ſinners to repentance; and, that the means which God uſeth with ſinners for this purpoſe, are *ſufficient*: yet inſiſts (p. 109.) that the application of invitations and commands is conſiſtent with a *freedom* to either ſide. And notwithſtanding the variety of his pleas, for the *ſufficiency* of means, with *fallen*, *depraved*, *impotent* creatures; it is, after all, to be remembered, that whatever action taketh place under the influence, either of any external cauſe, or internal, preponderating bias of mind, is not, yea, cannot be *free*, with that kind of liberty which is eſſential to the morality of action:—whatever action is not *ſelf-determined*, *ſelf-moved*, cannot, with the leaſt ſhew of reaſon, be the object, either of diſeſteem or approbation. He is, likewiſe, very full in acknowledging the *influence* of divine grace, in making the outward means effectual; and yet ſuppoſeth that ſuch a liberty as excludeth *all influence* from without, is eſſential to the very idea of deſert of praiſe or blame.

Thus doth it appear that our Author uſeth the terms *impotency*, *moral inability*, *fallen ſtate of our nature*, &c. as mere words of courſe: it is phraſeology which he adopts in compliance with cuſtom, and the prejudices which a narrow education hath, ſomehow, ſtrangely riveted on the minds of men. However frightful may be the NAMES, *fallen ſtate*, *moral inability*, *depravity*, &c. yet our Author meaneth no other than *harmleſs* and *innocent* THINGS. Nothing can be more unmeaning and inſignificant than ſuch-like phraſes as theſe, when applied to men—to moral characters—on ſuppoſition that men can be called *to act on no other principles than ſuch as they have—to exerciſe no other diſpoſitions than ſuch as they are endowed with*; and, that the freedom and liberty which we are endowed with

vith, by nature, excludeth the concurrence and oper-
tion of all extrinſic influence, in the taking place of
olition. Our Author eſpecially and particularly de-
ieth the diſtinction between *natural* and *moral* ina-
ility (p. 80, 81.) and hath wrote a book to prove,
n oppoſition to the dark ſuggeſtions of men of gloomy
pprehenſions, that mankind are now endowed with a
berty and freedom with which no ſuch *impotency* and
nability can conſiſt. And yet, in conformity to the
revailing prejudices, he himſelf hath adopted thoſe
arſh and uncouth epithets, with which *ſour*, *unmannerly*
igots have ſo often reproached human nature, and
randed mankind. It might have been preſumed,
hat a writer who cultivateth ſuch freedom of thought,
ould not have condeſcended ſo far to the weakneſs
nd prejudices of men.

It is an objection which hath been often made by
alviniſtic divines, againſt the doctrine of a power of
lf-determination in the will, that ſuch a power in
ankind would be inconſiſtent with the extenſive pro-
idence of God, and that abſolute, unlimited govern-
ent which he exerciſeth over his creatures; as he
ould hereby become liable to have his "ſchemes
warted, and his will reſiſted," by his creatures. In
nſwer to this objection, our Author quotes Jackſon
gainſt Collins, (ſee p. 78. marg.) as ſaying, that
The ſuperintendency and government of God are of
the *moral* kind, like that of a rational monarch over
his ſubjects, who gives them laws, enjoining obedi-
ence to them, and eſtabliſhing them with rewards
and puniſhments." And then ſays, "*It is the will of God*, that we ſhould act *freely*, and have it in our power *to do*, *or not to do*, his commandments." It
ay by ſome, perhaps, be thought ſtrange, that a Gen-
eman who exclaims ſo loudly againſt the ſentiments
nd principles of Mr. Edwards, as involving in them
e opinion that *ſin is agreeable to the divine will*, ſhould
et make *ſuch* a reply to the objection under conſidera-
on. If it is *agreeable to the will of God, that we*

ſhould have it in our power to do, or not to do, his commandments, and that we ſhould act freely ; that is, that we ſhould uſe the power we have to do or not to do his commandments *as we pleaſe ;* it appeareth to me an indubitable conſequence, that the ſchemes of divine government are not thwarted, nor his will *in any ſenſe* reſiſted, by his creatures, when they uſe this power of theirs, either in *diſobeying*, or *in obeying*, his commandments. If it is God's will that we ſhould have a power to do or not to do, and that we ſhould uſe this power freely, i. e. indulge the *liberty we have to either ſide ;* it is a ſure caſe, that the will of God is *never reſiſted* by our *exerciſing* and *indulging* this liberty and freedom, whether it be in chooſing *obedience* or *diſobedience*.

Is there any thing in the ſentiments of Mr. Edwards, that *upon the whole* it was agreeable to the divine mind and will, for wiſe and excellent ends to be by that means accompliſhed, that ſuch an event as ſin ſhould take place in his ſyſtem and under his government ? Is there any thing in the doctrines and opinion of Mr. Edwards upon this point, that hath greater appearance of caſting reproach upon the moral character of God, or a more direct tendency to leſſen our apprehenſions of the divine purity, and of the infinite hatred of the Deity to ſin, than is here advanced and very fully expreſſed ?

The truth, doubtleſs, is, that the ſchemes and purpoſes of the moral government of God are not, in fact, thwarted by any thing that ever did, or ever will, take place in the ſyſtem ; nor his will *in this ſenſe* reſiſted. And therefore there is no ground for ſuch an objection as this, ariſing *on any hand* from the conſideration of the infinite hatred of the Deity to ſin, and his moſt ſtrict prohibition of it. And yet when we conſider how much all events in the moral world depend on the volitions of rational, intelligent agents ; it is quite inconceivable that there ſhould be any *certainty* of the accompliſhment of any wiſe, determinate ends of moral government, if creatures were endowed with the pow-

ers

ers insisted on by our Author as necessary to moral action.

Upon the whole, the doctrine of the consistency of the *moral inability* of mankind, with their obligations to obedience, I am humbly of opinion, standeth upon a firm basis, with whatever ingenuity and appearance of reason our Author hath managed his argument against it; and that, even by his own frequent concessions and acknowledgment. The expressions which he so frequently useth, of, *the fallen state of our nature, the inability brought upon us by the fall, the impotency derived from the fall*, &c. if they have any meaning, and are not mere words of course and perfectly insignificant, do certainly imply some such *prevailing tendency* in the state of things, either internal or external, to *certain, determinate* actions and exercises of the mind, as is utterly inconsistent with that power of self-motion, self-determination, which excludeth the influence and concurrence of all extrinsic cause. If it is conceded, that the actings and exercises of the minds of men may be of a *moral nature*, consistently with their arising in *some degree* from some preponderating bias and influence, extrinsic of the exercises and determinations themselves; men will, probably, find no difficulty in their mind, in allowing such an *absolute previous certainty* of all events, as entirely excludeth all ideas of self-origination of volition. Nor can our Author, any farther, consistently, urge the importance and necessity of such a power; until he is more entirely liberated from the common, prevailing prejudices of mankind, respecting the *depravity* and *impotency* of human nature in its present state.

I am therefore humbly of opinion, that, although the Ex--r hath shown that *some* things which Mr. Edwards hath said respecting the *influence of motives upon the minds of men*, are not altogether just and correct; yet he, himself, hath left the subject not less in the dark than he found it: and therefore, even in this respect, hath no farther served the cause of truth, than *to dis-*

cover ſome incorrectneſs in a writer of ſuch character and eminence, as made every of his errors, in ſome ſenſe, peculiarly dangerous: but even this incorrectneſs, however real, doth not appear to affect his general argument, or endanger it. But our Author hath done nothing to the purpoſe, towards anſwering the arguments made uſe of by Mr. Edwards, in confutation of the doctrine of a power of ſelf-determination in man; or, reſolving the difficulties with which he hath ſhown that the opinion itſelf is moſt evidently embarraſſed. No where hath he ſhown that the arguments made uſe of, by that maſterly writer, are ſophiſtical and evaſive; or, that he ſhifteth and changeth, and appeareth backward to face the ſtrongeſt objections which are made againſt the opinions and ſentiments which he endeavours to vindicate and ſupport. Nothing hath our Author ſaid to invalidate the arguments by which Mr. Edwards proveth an eſtabliſhed connexion in things, and an infallible antecedent certainty of all events; or, to ſhew their weakneſs and inſufficiency for the ſupport of a doctrine of ſo much importance: nor yet doth it appear, I am humbly of opinion, that he hath ſtarted and urged any objections againſt the ſcheme of doctrine advanced by that excellent divine, but ſuch as were ſufficiently conſidered, obviated and refuted, in the very book upon which he is animadverting. I ſay, *ſufficiently;* becauſe our Author hath no where ſhown that *his* anſwers to objections, and ſolution of difficulties, is not juſt and deciſive. The ſum of the Ex—r's objections againſt an infallible previous certainty of all events which ever take place, in the whole ſyſtem, as well *moral* as *natural*, is, as I have before obſerved, that ſuch a doctrine reproacheth the moral character of God, and ſuppoſeth him to be the author of ſin; which is inconſiſtent with all our ideas of him as the juſt judge and moral governor of the world; and, therefore, that it is a doctrine neceſſarily leſſening our apprehenſions of the purity and holineſs of the divine nature, and, indeed, quite aboliſhing and throwing

ing down all distinction between moral good and evil, virtue and vice.

The consideration of this great and popular objection shall be my next business, and the subject of the ensuing part of this Essay. I will now, therefore, relieve the patience of the reader, after only requesting his candour in his attention to what I may offer on this important subject.

PART

PART II.

Wherein the divine agency and diſpoſal, reſpecting the taking place of moral evil in the ſyſtem, are humbly and carefully inquired into, and particularly conſidered.

THAT the DIVINE BEING ſhould exert any poſitive agency and influence in ſuch a diſpoſal of things in his ſyſtem, as he certainly knew would be infallibly attended with the conſequence of the taking place of *moral evil*, hath been thought, by many, an opinion too bold and daring to be admitted; involving in it the moſt baſe and unworthy apprehenſions of God, and being moſt reproachful to the wiſdom and purity of his laws and government. Accordingly we find, that the great objection which is frequently made againſt the *calviniſtic* ſcheme of doctrine, viz. that it ſuppoſeth God to be the author of ſin, hath appeared ſo formidable, that writers, in general, have evaded a direct anſwer to it; and endeavoured to faſten the ſame upon their adverſaries.

And, indeed, that God ſhould be, in any degree, the AUTHOR of ſin, in that ſenſe in which the term *author* is very frequently uſed, is a ſuppoſition full of abſurdity and blaſphemy; and incapable of being, one moment, admitted. The term *author* very frequently conveys the idea of *doing*, *performing*, or *acting*. When we ſpeak of a man as the *author* of any action, or fact, we uſually mean the ſame, as *actor* or *doer* of it. When we ſpeak of any perſon as being the *author* of a piece of wickedneſs, we mean the ſame as *actor* or *perpetrator* of it. When ſuch an idea as this is comprehended under the term *author*, there is ſomething ſo harſh and grating—ſomething ſo abhorrent from all our natural

notions

notions of God, and of the equity and excellency of his moral government, in the opinion that HE is *the author of sin*—that it may reasonably be expected it will immediately disgust, and appear shocking to the natural reason and common understandings of men.

If the doctrine of an antecedent certainty of all events, and a *fixed, established connexion* of cause and effect, as well in the *moral* as in the *natural* world, *in this sense* maketh God the *author* of sin—if it is a doctrine containing in it so blasphemous a consequence, and reflecting such infinite contempt and reproach upon the moral character of the righteous and glorious Governor of the world—it *ought* to be rejected with the utmost abhorrence; and doubtless *will be*, by all such as have any regard for the honour of God. In me, I am sure, it shall not find an advocate, whenever it is made manifest that it carrieth in it such an implication.

BUT the question I would propose to an humble and careful inquiry, is, *Whether God hath not so disposed and arranged things, in his system, by his own positive influence and agency, as, in effect, insured and made certain the existence and taking place of sin?—Whether he hath not put forth such exertions of his own almighty and resistless power, as he certainly knew would, either mediately or immediately, issue in such an event?—Yea, whether the infinitely wise and holy God hath not exerted his own divine, omnipotent power, in such a way and manner as he actually* DESIGNED *and* PURPOSED *should be followed by the existence and entrance of moral evil into his system?* * To

* The whole of this question may be comprehended in the inquiry, *Whether God hath not* DECREED, *or* WILLED, *that moral evil* shall take place? We know not what *agency* there is of the Deity, besides the *exercises of his will*; nor, what *power* he puts forth, more than *willing*. So that, on the whole, the only inquiry is, Whether, all things being taken into consideration, it were not the *will* and *purpose* of God, that moral evil should exist? Though many seem to think it an opinion which reflecteth upon the moral character of God, to imagine any *positive purpose and disposal* in the Deity, in favour of the existence of moral evil; yet it is an opinion most evidently included in many things plainly held and conceded to, by divines of almost every denomination. Thus Dr. Taylor himself, who frequently objecteth against the *calvinistic* scheme of doctrine, that it maketh God the author of sin; (see his Scrip. Doct. edit. II. &c. p. 110. 137. 146. 184. 190. &c.) yet tells us, that satan's permission to tempt us "*is the appointment of God our Creator*, who alone is wise, and who alone hath a right to *appoint* our trials."

To this ſolemn and important inquiry would I now addreſs myſelf, with all due humility; and yet with freedom; craving the reader's candid and critical attention to what I may offer on the ſubject.

If it can be made evident that the exiſtence and taking place of ſin is the occaſion of more and greater good, in the ſyſtem; and therefore, that it was, upon the whole, *deſirable* in the nature of things, that there ſhould be ſuch an event: and if, farthermore, the ſuppoſition of a *poſitive diſpoſal* of the Deity in favour of the taking place of this event; and, in ſuch a manner as to *inſure* and give *infallible certainty* of its exiſtence; doth not, at all, reproach the *moral character* of God; nor is any way inconſiſtent with his ſpotleſs purity and holineſs, and his infinite hatred and averſion to all ſin:—if ſuch a divine diſpoſal, reſpecting the taking place of moral evil, is no ways repugnant to his ſtrict prohibitions of ſin, and that upon ſo ſevere a penalty as the eternal death of the ſinner; nor, in any meaſure, diminiſheth the criminality of it; or rendereth it unfit and unreaſonable that the ſinner ſhould be puniſhed for it:—if, I ſay, it can be made evident that theſe are matters of undoubted truth, certainty and importance; the principal difficulties and obſtacles in the way of admitting the opinion of a *poſitive divine agency and diſpoſal inſuring* the future exiſtence of ſuch an event, and giving *certain futurity* to it, will then

trials." (See p. 156.) And that the *paſſions* and *appetites* of children ſhould be of the ſame degree or quality with thoſe of their progenitors (as he alloweth that they may be) he tells us, "can truly be aſſigned to no other cauſe beſides *the* "*will of God*, who wiſely *appoints* to every man his conſtitution and all his other "trials as he thinks fit." (p. 191.) And yet the Doctor alloweth that there is *danger, great danger*, that our ſenſual appetites and paſſions ſhall become irregular and ſinful, in a world *ſo corrupt and full of temptation as ours is*. (p. 186.) And "that we are *very apt*, in a world full of temptation, to be deceived and drawn "into ſin by bodily appetites." (p. 228.) Now if it is the *will of God* that we ſhould have ſuch conſtitutions as we have, and appetites and paſſions ſo expoſing us to ſin; and if *he hath put us* into a world under ſuch circumſtances as that we ſhall be *exceeding apt* to ſin, and hath *appointed* that we ſhould be ſubject to the temptations of the devil:—if God hath *appointed* all theſe circumſtances, which are univerſally followed by men's actually committing ſin; and it was *his will* that theſe occaſions, circumſtances and cauſes ſhould all actually exiſt; all this will ſurely amount to very little ſhort of a *poſitive divine diſpoſal* in favour of the exiſtence and taking place of moral evil.

then be removed: and the great and popular objection againſt ſome of the important doctrines of revelation—viz. That they appear to make God the author of ſin—will be removed; and the objection itſelf will appear leſs formidable than hath, often, been apprehended.

If theſe things can be made evident, and are clearly conſiſtent with reaſon and the common ſenſe and apprehenſions of men; it will ſurely be manifeſt, that this great and popular objection is an argument capable of being uſed to much better purpoſe, and greater advantage, in addreſſes to the *imagination*, than the underſtanding of men.

If, moreover, a divine agency and poſitive diſpoſal, giving *certainty* to the exiſtence of moral evil, ſhall appear to be the dictate of the common ſenſe and reaſon of men; and, alſo, a doctrine fully aſſerted, and clearly taught and held up to view, in the word of God; this, it is preſumed, will be ſufficient to ſilence the cavils of men; and *theſe* are conſiderations of ſufficient weight to prevent *their* being made an objection againſt any doctrine whatſoever.

Theſe are ſubjects which I would propoſe to a humble and careful inquiry, in the following ſections. I have only to aſk a patient and fair hearing; and that no one would condemn me, without giving the reaſons I offer in ſupport of my opinion, a careful conſideration, and allowing them their juſt weight.

SECT. I.

Wherein it is inquired, Whether the exiſtence and taking place of ſin are not the occaſion of MORE AND GREATER GOOD, *in the ſyſtem, than could otherwiſe have been effected and produced?*

THAT *ſin* ſhould be, in ſuch a ſenſe and to ſuch a degree, the occaſion of *greater good* in the univerſe, as to render it upon the whole *deſirable* that it

ſhould ever actually come into exiſtence, is an opinion which the Author of the Examination of Mr. Edwards, &c. thinks is very extravagant, and that it containeth in it, conſequences which are very ſhocking and abſurd. He ſuppoſeth that, upon admitting ſuch an hypotheſis, it will follow, "That the law of man's "nature, at firſt, was imperfect—that the revolt of "men and angels, was in compliance with the end of "their being, and the wiſe and gracious intention of "the Creator." (See p. 74.) That ſin is *in fact* followed with greater good, our Author conſidereth as matter of "mere conjecture, at beſt—without any "ſolid foundation. For (ſaith he) unleſs we can tell "what would have been, had ſin never entered the "world, it is impoſſible we ſhould be able to judge, "by way of compariſon, of the greater good conſe-"quent upon it; or be able to ſay that it is beſt upon "the whole." (p. 75.) It is acknowledged that where the objects, between which a compariſon is to be formed, are not both in view, we cannot judge of them by way of compariſon. But as to the two events, viz. the taking place of moral evil in the univerſe, and its oppoſite; a little conſideration may, perhaps, be ſufficient to convince us that they are objects *by one means or another* ſo far brought within the compaſs of our view, as to enable us to form a comparative judgment between them.

And that we may be enabled to form a judgment in the preſent caſe, and conclude with ſome degree of certainty that ſin is the *occaſion* of more and greater good, in the ſyſtem, than would or could have been, if moral evil had not taken place; I would propoſe the following arguments to conſideration—after premiſing,

1. That the exiſtence and taking place of *moral evil*, and *the univerſal reign of holineſs*, in the ſyſtem, are events *directly the reverſe* of each other. There are no two objects, wherein are to be found a greater diverſity, or a more direct and full oppoſition to each other,

other, than in *holineſs* and *ſin*. There is no degree of communion, harmony or agreement between them; nor any quality which they poſſeſs in common with each other. There is ever the moſt perfect diſcord and variance between *virtue* and *vice*. There is not the leaſt degree of concurrence of *tendency* and *influence*, in holineſs and ſin. No two things can be more oppoſite and perfectly repugnant to each other.

2. That theſe two events muſt neceſſarily be attended with a great and remarkable diverſity of *effects*; and that, through the whole intelligent ſyſtem—the creation of God. The whole moral *created* ſyſtem, in all and every part of it, feels the change introduced by the taking place of ſin. There is not one intelligent, moral being, within the whole circle of created nature, but feels, and forever will feel, his circumſtances and condition, in ſome reſpects or other, to be greatly altered and widely different from what they would have been, if moral evil had never made its appearance in the ſyſtem. And this change, moreover, is ſuch as will affect every creature, not only for ſome conſiderable time and ſpace, but will reach and extend its effects to endleſs ages—to eternity. The introduction of *moral evil* will diverſify the circumſtances of every individual in the whole ſyſtem of created intelligences, forever and ever.

This diverſity of effect in the moral, created ſyſtem, will be *infinite*; things never reverting into the former channel, and recurring to the ſame circumſtances as if ſin had never taken place; nor even *approaching* thereto: the variety of circumſtances and condition, on the other hand, continually augmenting and increaſing to eternity.

The ſcheme and method of divine adminiſtration and government are infinitely diverſified by the introduction of moral evil—the taking place of ſin: and by this means ſuch a ſcene is opened in the moral world, as tendeth exceedingly to raiſe and exalt our ideas of the power, wiſdom and goodneſs of Him who ſits at

the head of the ſyſtem, and whoſe powerful arm alone holds and manageth the helm. The methods of government, in the kingdom of God, are, in general, new; and exceedingly diverſe from what they would have been, had ſin never taken place.

This oppoſition of tendency to each other, in *holineſs* and *ſin*; and this infinite diverſity in the ſtate and circumſtances of all moral, created beings, and in the whole ſcheme and plan of the moral government of God; I take to be matters of undoubted certainty—indiſputable truth.

Theſe conſiderations, I am humbly of opinion, may lay a foundation for determining, with ſome degree of certainty, the expediency and propriety of ſuch a diſpoſition of things, ſuch a method and plan of operation, as ſhould be introductory of *moral evil*, and certainly followed by the taking place of ſin: and, enable us to form a comparative judgment, with a great degree of preciſion, between the degrees of GOOD which ſhould ariſe and actually be accompliſhed in the ſyſtem, under theſe ſeverally different and exceedingly diverſe ſchemes and methods of government and adminiſtration.

And that the ſcheme of government and plan of operation under which *moral evil* ſhould certainly take place, tend to the greater, yea, far greater, GOOD of the moral world; and that ſome very deſirable, valuable and excellent end is to be herein anſwered, which could not ſo well have been accompliſhed in any other way; may appear from the following conſideration.

I. It is altogether inconceivable, that the ſcenes of ſuch infinite diverſity of operation and effect, ſhould be *equally beautiful, equally conducive to the general and greateſt good*. That plans and ſcenes of operation ſo exceedingly the reverſe of each other; and, of events of ſuch infinite diverſity, ſuch perfect and full oppoſition of tendency to each other; both, too, attended with conſequences infinitely extenſive and great; ſhould yet be ſo exactly and perfectly balanced, and

equally

equally productive of GOOD, as to leave no room for *infinite*, *all-penetrating* wisdom to distinguish between them, nor ground upon which a preference might be formed; is a supposition so very extravagant, that no serious, thinking person can possibly admit and entertain it.

If WISDOM gave the preference to a plan of government and scene of operation, wherein *sin* should *never* take place—*moral evil never* come into existence—the wickedness which taketh place under the divine administration of government is not *only* in its *nature* and *tendency* reproachful to GOD, but such an actual stain and blemish in his character and government, as it is impossible ever to wipe off or conceal. The supposition of such a preference of WISDOM as this, most evidently chargeth the Deity with a defect, either in wisdom, goodness, or power. In *wisdom*—that he did not foresee and devise what would be most for the general good; or in *goodness*, that he did not actually choose and prefer it; or in *power*, that he did not accomplish his own *wise* and *benevolent* designs.*

To suppose that ends and purposes, *equally* wise and excellent, should be brought about and accomplished, under methods of government and administration so exceedingly and infinitely the reverse of each other, is putting such an *alternative* upon the Deity, as taketh away all possible room and ground for *any voluntary determination* at all, in the case; and is a supposition which maketh it abundantly to appear, that the coming into existence of the present system, such as it actually is, in *distinction* from any other, was not the fruit of *wisdom*—of *wise design and determination*. So that the Psalmist, when speaking, in Ps. civ. 24. of the manifold works of God, was under a gross mistake in saying,

* "God is an *omnipotent* good, and it is his peculiar glory to bring *good* out of "*evil*, that by the opposition and lustre of *contraries* his goodness might be *the* "*more conspicuous*.——'Tis an impious folly to imagine that God was either de- "fective in *wisdom*, not to know what was the best state for man in his creation; "or defective in *goodness*, that, knowing it, he would not confer it upon him; "or defective in *power*, that, willing, he was unable to make him better." (See Dr. *Bates on the harmony of the divine attributes*, third edition, p. 47.)

ing, "in *wiſdom* haſt thou made them all," or even apprehending it; but he aſcribed *that* to God, which doth not, in fact, appear in his works.

Beſides:—To ſuppoſe that the GOOD to ariſe from this diverſity of effect and operation in the moral world, was ſo exactly and equally balanced and proportioned, in theſe ſeverally different plans of adminiſtration, as to exclude all room for a *preference* of the one before the other, implieth that it was not an *undeſirable* thing, upon the whole, that moral evil ſhould take place and come into exiſtence. It implieth, likewiſe, that the *infinitely wiſe and good Being* did not, himſelf, *prefer* a method and ſcene of operation and government, which ſhould entirely exclude any ſuch event.

When the univerſal and uninterrupted reign of holineſs, in all ages, and all orders and ranks of beings, *on the one hand*; and the exiſtence of moral evil, and its amazingly extenſive reign, *on the other*; were events (to ſpeak after the manner of men) in contemplation in the divine mind (as it muſt be, on all hands, admitted that God had a perfect knowledge, foreſight and view of all poſſible exiſtences and events)—if that ſyſtem and ſcene of operation, in which moral evil ſhould never have exiſtence, was actually *choſen* and *preferred* in the divine mind; certainly the Deity is infinitely diſappointed in the iſſue of his own operations—if, indeed, they may be called *his own*: and it muſt needs be that HIS will is infinitely more croſſed and thwarted by that ſcene and courſe of events which are actually exhibited to view, than that of *any*, or *all*, other beings together, in this extended, complicated ſyſtem.

II. From the preceding obſervations it is abundantly manifeſt, that the plan of government, and ſcene of operation and events, which is *actually furniſhed out to view* in the preſent ſyſtem, was the fruit of CHOICE—of PRUDENT, WISE DESIGN. Nothing can be more diſhonorable and reproachful to God, than to imagine that

that the ſyſtem which is actually formed by the divine hand, and which was made for his pleaſure and glory, is, yet, not the fruit of wiſe contrivance and deſign. And it muſt be equally inconſiſtent with all our ideas of the *natural* as well as *moral* perfections of God, to apprehend that he had not in his view, antecedent to creation, the *poſſibility* of a ſyſtem of intelligences, among whom there ſhould be no defection from God. Our Author himſelf ſpeaketh in terms naturally tending to excite, in his readers, an apprehenſion that he imagined ſuch a ſyſtem a *conceivable* thing. He ſays (p. 75.) "To ſay it (*ſin*) could not have been pre-"vented, is ſaying more than any one knows." And yet he ſaith, "How ſin came to be permitted, is more "than any one can comprehend." The very ſuppoſition, however, of a poſſibility of a ſyſtem of intelligences perfectly holy, and free from all degrees of ſin; doth very naturally ſuggeſt to us one general reaſon for the exiſtence of ſuch a ſyſtem as that in which we now are, viz. that ſome *more wiſe and excellent ends* are to be accompliſhed under the preſent ſyſtem of government and adminiſtration, than could have been brought about in a ſyſtem and under a government wherein no ſuch thing as moral evil took place. If we admit the poſſibility that ſin could have been prevented in the moral world; how can we otherwiſe reconcile it to the divine character and government, that ſuch an event hath been, in fact, permitted to take place—yea, and that moral evil hath been ſuffered to ſpread over ſo great a part of the ſyſtem—otherwiſe than by ſuppoſing that it will be the occaſion of *greater good* in the univerſe, than could otherwiſe have been accompliſhed?

When we conſider the infinite extent of the wiſdom, goodneſs and power of God, and take into view his abſolute ſupremacy, government and authority; it muſt be a very *peculiar ſtretch* of imagination and thought, that can ſuppoſe the preſent ſyſtem of events and adminiſtration is not, in all its parts, the fruit of

choice,

choice, and wiſe deſign; and that, in *preference* to all other ſyſtems poſſible or conceivable:—And *this* it certainly could not be, unleſs ſome more wiſe and valuable ends were to be accompliſhed, than *could* have been brought to paſs in a ſyſtem wherein there was no moral evil. However great and infinite may be the conceivable variety of ſyſtems, which the divine, omnipotent mind may be ſuppoſed to have in view; yet they may be all comprehended under this one general diſtinction, of being *with*, or *without* ſin. And between ſyſtems, *in this general view only*, is the comparative judgment to be formed, and the preference to be given of the one, before the other. What the judgment and preference of the divine mind *in fact* were, is ſufficiently evident in event:—an authority upon which we may ſafely conclude the preferableneſs of *ſuch a ſyſtem* before any other; and, that ſome *more valuable ends* will be accompliſhed in the preſent ſyſtem, than *could have been* under any other.

Theſe conſiderations, it may poſſibly be thought, are ſufficient to enable us to judge, *by way of compariſon*, of the *greater good* conſequent upon the taking place of ſin.

However, before we proceed to the conſideration of the other arguments from whence it appeareth that the exiſtence of *moral evil* is the occaſion of *greater good* than could otherwiſe have taken place, it may be proper to make ſome general obſervations reſpecting the GREATEST GOOD, to ſhew what it is, and wherein it doth conſiſt.

And, in general (as far as it relateth to the preſent queſtion) *the greateſt and moſt extenſive exerciſe, and the moſt full and complete manifeſtation of the divine perfections, is the* GREATEST GOOD.

The *greateſt good* of the univerſe muſt neceſſarily be, either the *real, inherent, neceſſary perfections of* JEHOVAH; or, *their exerciſe and manifeſtation in their proper and genuine fruits*. Or, in other words, the GLORY OF GOD, IN GENERAL, is the greateſt good.

good. The *essential glory* of GOD consisteth *in his perfect and infinite sufficiency for great and excellent things*. It is unquestionably desirable, in the very nature of things, that this *sufficiency* of the DEITY *for great and excellent things*, should be *manifested* and *appear* in its proper and genuine fruits and effects. For why is such a sufficiency for great and excellent things *desirable*, but that it may actually effect, produce and accomplish them?

This *appearance* or *manifestation* of this infinite sufficiency of the Deity for great and excellent things, in its proper and genuine fruits and effects; is what constituteth his *declarative* glory: for in this *appearance*, *exercise*, or *manifestation*, it essentially consisteth. *Where*, therefore, there is the largest and most extensive *exercise* of the divine perfections, and the fullest *appearance and display* of the infinite sufficiency there is in GOD for great and excellent things, in its genuine and natural fruits and effects; *there* is, without question, the GREATEST GOOD.

These considerations would naturally lead us to conclude, that the infinitely wise and good God, when entering upon the work of creation, would infallibly choose such a system as would open a field for the largest display and most extensive exercise of his own inherent, infinite excellency and perfection. If the true beauty and glory of the infinite sufficiency there is in God for great and excellent things, consisteth in its being *exercised and put forth into act*, and *appearing in its genuine expressions and natural fruits*; reason would, then, teach us that the *wisdom* of the Deity, when he was entering upon the formation of a system, for the very purpose of exercising and displaying his infinite perfection, would necessarily direct to the choice of such an one as would spread the most extensive scene of operation, and afford the largest field for the display of the inexhaustible treasures of his perfection. *

* The divine moral perfection summarily consists in *goodness*. The brightest display, therefore, of the moral perfection of God, is the same as the greatest manifestation and highest exercise of *true goodness*. The tendency of *goodness*, in its

It may, alſo, be proper here to obſerve a few things reſpecting the *manner of effecting the greateſt good, and the way wherein only it can be accompliſhed.*

It hath been obſerved, that the *greateſt good*, as far as it relateth to the preſent argument, is nothing different from the fulleſt manifeſtation, and largeſt and moſt extenſive exerciſe and diſplay, of the divine perfections, in their genuine, proper and natural fruits. And it muſt neceſſarily be ſo: for if the inherent, neceſſary perfections of the Deity, are really *moſt excellent* and *infinitely great*; it very clearly followeth, that the moſt full, complete and extenſive *exerciſe* of theſe perfections, and the moſt ſenſible, diſcernible manifeſtation of them in their genuine expreſſions and fruits, is the greateſt good which can be produced by creation, and appear in, and be accompliſhed by it.

Theſe things being conſidered, it may perhaps appear, that the exiſtence of *moral evil* is a *neceſſary means* of the greateſt good; yea, if the moſt full and extenſive *exerciſe* and *manifeſtation* of the inherent perfections of the divine nature, in their genuine effects and fruits, is, either *itſelf* the greateſt good, or neceſſarily involves and contains it; it moſt certainly followeth, that *moral evil* was a *neceſſary means* of the greateſt good. Many are apt to conſider it as an inſtance of the greateſt arrogance, to ſuppoſe that God *could not* have accompliſhed all the wiſe and excellent ends which actually appear and take place in the preſent ſyſtem as it is, if moral evil had never taken place—That it doth not appear but that he might as fully have manifeſted himſelf, in his own infinite ſufficiency and perfection, to the views and underſtanding of his creatures; and, therefore, have accompliſhed all the ſame excellent ends, if he had ſo ſeen meet, without this moſt melancholy of all events. They who talk or think in this ſtrain, ought to remember,

1. That in thoſe works of his, wherein he is purpoſing

its exerciſes, is to *do and produce good.* Where there are the higheſt exerciſes of divine goodneſs, there the greateſt good is done. The higheſt exerciſes of the divine goodneſs, neceſſarily ſuppoſe the higheſt good to be effected.

poſing to diſplay his moral character, and make a real manifeſtation of himſelf to the underſtanding and views of his intelligent creatures; it is worthy of his wiſdom, befitting his infinitely glorious character, to adapt himſelf to his creatures, and accommodate himſelf to their capacities, underſtanding and powers, in thoſe of his works wherein are particularly deſigned to be exhibited the excellencies and beauties of his infinitely ſublime and amiable character. However full and infinitely ſtrong the *real exerciſe* of that moſt glorious and infinitely amiable and beautiful diſpoſition of the divine mind which conſtitutes his moral character may be in itſelf; yet, if the exerciſe is not in ſuch a way and manner, and ſo ſenſible, as to be diſcernible and perceptible by his creatures; the end of creation, and of its exerciſe, is not anſwered; and, agreeable to what hath been before ſaid, the *greateſt good* not effected and produced.

2. The ſame wiſdom which will direct that the Deity ſhould accommodate himſelf to his creatures, in the exhibitions he is making of his perfections, in his works, will, likewiſe, for the ſame reaſons, direct that he ſhould accommodate himſelf in his operations, and adapt himſelf *in the beſt conceivable manner*, to their underſtandings, capacities and powers. That if *one particular plan—one definite method* of operation—ſhall ſerve to make the divine character more ſuſceptible and diſcernible by his creatures, and more fully and abundantly exhibit *to their view* the *very diſpoſition* which is inherently in him; then this muſt be the plan—this the method of operation, which will infallibly be choſen by infinite wiſdom.

3. The Deity can be known by his creatures *only in his works*; and his character ſeen and underſtood *only in events which are immediately diſcernible and perceptible by us*. It is incompatible with the idea of *creature*, to know God by *direct*, *immediate* perception, or in the ſame way wherein we *know* ourſelves, and are immediately perceptive and conſcious of our own thoughts

and exercises. This would be such a kind of union of the creature to the Deity, as implieth sameness of consciousness, and absolute divinity. This would be that same nearness and union, which subsist between the THREE PERSONS of the ever blessed and adorable TRINITY.

To say, therefore, that God *cannot make known* his perfections, otherwise than by causing them to *appear in fruits*, is not setting bounds to the *power* or *wisdom* of God, but to the powers and capacities of *creatures*. It is, in effect, only saying, that God *cannot* make his perfections *appear*, without causing them *actually to appear*. And it is so far from implying any limitation of the perfections of the Holy One of Israel, that it only implieth a limitation of the powers and capacities of *created beings—imperfection* necessarily cleaving to them.

Such considerations as these would naturally lead us to conclude that GOD, in his infinite wisdom, first formed the system with a *particular*, *express view* to the most clear and full discovery and manifestation of his own infinite perfections—the inherent and infinitely excellent disposition of his divine nature—*especially* in his kingdom of redemption—That *all things* were most perfectly adjusted, in infinite wisdom; and *every event*, *of whatever nature or kind*, which was ever to become extant in any part of the system, most exactly bounded, limited and circumscribed, by the fore-knowledge and determinate counsel of God.

These observations make way for pursuing, to better advantage, the general argument under consideration; and making it more clearly and manifestly appear, that the existence of *moral evil* in the system is the occasion of *far greater good* than ever *could have* been accomplished if there never had been sin.

The following excellent ends have unquestionably been answered by the existence of *moral evil*, or the taking place of sin.

I. The existence of moral evil hath undoubtedly occasioned

occaſioned a more perfect, full and glorious diſcovery of the infinite averſion and irreconcilable hatred of the holy and pure nature of GOD, to all ſin, than could any otherwiſe poſſibly have been made to the views of creatures. How exceedingly great and infinitely ſtrong the oppoſition of the divine mind is to all ſin, and his utter abhorrence of all moral evil, and averſion to it; are more clearly and perfectly *delineated and expreſſed*, in the juſt puniſhment of it, than it is poſſible or conceivable that it ſhould be, in any other way. The averſion and hatred of the divine mind to moral evil, are *expreſſed* only in the *appearance* of its oppoſition to it. And the fulleſt and ſtrongeſt *appearance* there can be, to the views of creatures, of the oppoſition of the divine nature to ſin, is in the puniſhment of the ſinner. There is no other way for the infinite averſion of the divine mind to ſin to appear in *fruits and in effects*, than in its puniſhment. And as this infinite purity and holineſs—this moſt perfect and irreconcilable hatred of the divine mind to moral evil, are the peculiar glory of God; ſo all the appearances and manifeſtations of this diſpoſition, in whatever God doth, are lovely and excellent: it being, in the nature of things, moſt deſirable that there ſhould be made the moſt full and clear diſcovery and manifeſtation that can be, of this diſpoſition of the divine mind, to the views of intelligent creatures who are capable of beholding and admiring it.

That things, therefore, in the ſyſtem of God, ſhould be ſo ordered, arranged and diſpoſed, as to make way and afford an opportunity for thoſe wonderfully glorious and full diſcoveries of this infinitely excellent and amiable diſpoſition of the pure and holy nature of God, in the eternal puniſhment of fallen angels, and of impenitent ſinners among men; and, above all, in the ſufferings of the Son of God; is certainly a fruit of infinite wiſdom and infinite goodneſs. For never could the appearances of this diſpoſition of the divine mind, have been ſo clear and ſtrong to the views and

comprehenſion of creatures, if moral evil had not taken place; nor any thing which carried in it proper deſert of the contempt, diſpleaſure and anger of the *infinite Being*, appeared in any of the numberleſs race of the creatures of God.

II. As the exiſtence of *moral evil* hath occaſioned an abundantly more clear and glorious diſcovery of the infinite purity of the divine nature, and the exceeding ſtrength of his averſion to ſin; ſo, alſo, hath it, in like manner, laid a foundation for God's *eſtabliſhing* his ſupremacy, authority and government over his creatures, upon a more ſure and firm baſis than there would have been advantage and opportunity for, had no ſuch thing ever appeared in event. Now all creatures do or will ſee, in a more clear, lively and affecting manner than could otherwiſe have poſſibly been diſcovered to them, what a "fearful thing it is to fall into the hand of the living God," and the infinite hazard they run in preſuming to rebel againſt him. Nothing ſo eſtabliſheth the authority of JEHOVAH, in the minds of his creatures, and giveth ſuch clear and awful views and exalted ideas of his majeſty and ſupremacy, as the amazing torments and juſt ſufferings of the enemies of God continually before their eyes. In the clear and full views of the torments of the damned in hell, it doubtleſs is, that the elect Angels and Saints in heaven are ſupported and ſecured in obedience, and in perpetual allegiance to him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. By this means, and in this glorious act of juſtice on his final enemies, God hath forever eſtabliſhed his authority through his wide, extended government and dominion; by this means eternally ſecuring the perfect obedience of all creatures of every rank and order: So that peace and undiſturbed harmony ſhall forever reign among all who have not yet rebelled againſt God.*

III. The

* When I ſpeak of various ranks and orders of creatures who are ſecured in obedience, and over whom the divine authority is eſtabliſhed, by means of the puniſhment of the damned in hell; I do not mean that any reference ſhould be had

III. The *infinite goodneſs and love of God* appear in a far more ſtrong and glorious light to the views of creatures, than they ever could, if moral evil had not taken place. Though this event hath, in no degree, augmented the goodneſs and love of God; yet it hath adminiſtered occaſion of a more full and glorious diſcovery of the inherent goodneſs of the divine nature, *to the views and apprehenſions of creatures*, than there would have been any advantage and opportunity for, if there had never been any ſuch event.

The event and conſequence of the exiſtence of moral evil, *in fact are* the moſt ſurpriſing diſcoveries of the infinite goodneſs and grace of God. And whatever is the end in which the work of creation iſſueth, *in event*, we may with much ſafety conclude, was an end which God himſelf had ultimately in view, in *producing* creation. And we may, with equal ſafety, conclude, that with a ſpecial view to *this end* it was that God formed the world, and arranged things in that particular order which we behold.

There are ſeveral ways wherein the *infinite goodneſs, and love, and marvellous grace* of God now appear in an abundantly more clear, ſtrong and glorious light, *to the views of creatures*, than there could be any advantage or opportunity for them to diſcover, had moral evil never taken place. Particularly,

1. In

had to any ſuppoſed ranks of intelligent creatures inhabiting the ſeveral bodies which compoſe this ſyſtem and ſurround our world. If any ſuch there are, they will doubtleſs receive ſome ſignal benefit and advantage from that glorious exerciſe of the divine authority which appeareth in the eternal torments of the damned in hell. On the contrary; the ſuppoſition itſelf, that the planetary worlds are inhabited by intelligent beings, notwithſtanding all the ingenious conjectures of men, appears to me, *at leaſt* extremely uncertain, and without any ſolid reaſon for its ſupport. The general argument of God's having made nothing in vain, in favour of this ſuppoſition, I am humbly of opinion, is far from being ſufficient for the ſupport of ſo important an hypotheſis. Far ſhould we be from having any reaſon to conſider them as being made in vain, according to my apprehenſion of things, if we ſhould admit that they are utterly deſtitute of any intelligent inhabitant. For, on the other hand, it is evidently worthy of GOD that he ſhould, as it were, take ſtate upon himſelf, in his appearance upon a theatre where ſuch great and marvellous deſigns are carrying on, as are tranſacting in this our world. And when the principal character in the grand drama, is no leſs than that of THE SON OF GOD, it ſeemeth fit and ſuitable to his dignity, that the ſcene ſhould be hung with ſymbols and enſigns of majeſty; fitted to awaken the reſpectful awe, and engage the ſolemn attention, of the ſpectators and ſubjects of ſo ſublime and noble an action.

1. In his oppoſing *that* which oppoſeth the general good. The divine love is as conſpicuous in its oppoſition to every thing which is detrimental to the general good, as in the poſitive favours and bleſſings diffuſed under God's excellent and glorious government: as the affection of a juſt and generous Prince, and his concern to promote the peace and tranquillity of his ſubjects, are as evident and pleaſing in his care to reſiſt and repel their enemies, as in his concern to diffuſe the poſitive bleſſings of peace; and, as conſpicuous in his ſteady and unſhaken reſolution to puniſh offenders againſt the laws and peace of the community, as in protecting his loyal and obedient ſubjects in the quiet poſſeſſion of their properties and rights.

So the love of an affectionate and faithful *huſband*, though otherwiſe it had never been queſtioned, appeareth in far more winning and pleaſing light upon occaſion being afforded of his ſhewing his juſt, manly and generous reſentment of any abuſive treatment of his *wife*. And *ſhe* herein becometh ſenſible of a *ſtrength and fervor of love*—a *cloſeneſs of union of heart* to her, of which ſhe never before could have any clear ideas and juſt conceptions. And this diſcovery cannot but be exceedingly pleaſing and raviſhing to the wife. So the infinite extent of the divine love, and the amazing ſtrength of the union of heart, of the glorious Sum of all being, to the general and greateſt good; appear in a more admirably ſtrong and amiable light in the infinite ſtrength of his oppoſition to ſin and wickedneſs, and to ſuch as obſtinately oppoſe the good of the ſyſtem, than they poſſibly could have done *to the views of creatures*, if moral evil had never taken place.

2. The divine goodneſs and love appear *particularly free, generous and conſpicuous*, from the conſideration of the exceeding unworthineſs and vileneſs, and the utter ill-deſert, of ſuch as are made the ſubjects of *divine grace*. The teſtimonies of divine goodneſs might, undoubtedly, have been exceedingly ſtrong as well as innumerable, if no ſin had ever diſturbed the peace,

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and interrupted the harmony, of the moral, created world. But never could it have been ſo abundantly manifeſt *to the views of creatures*, that the bleſſings, the natural good, diffuſed through the univerſe, had their *ſource entirely in the free, diffuſive nature—the infinite benevolence and munificence, of the divine mind and diſpoſition*. The more unworthy the object, the more doth *all good* appear to proceed from the very nature of him who beſtoweth it; and, to take its riſe purely in the temper and diſpoſition which are inherent in him. As the caſe now in fact is, in beſtowing mercy and favour upon ſinners, the divine Being appeared to be ſelf-moved, i. e. to act from the inherent goodneſs of his own infinitely pure and benevolent nature; to be merciful, becauſe it is his nature to be merciful. As the characters of mankind really are, it abundantly appeareth, that God ſheweth mercy and doeth good *for his own ſake*—becauſe it is his pleaſure, his delight, and the higheſt gratification of his own infinitely amiable, pure and holy nature; and becauſe it is *that* wherein his own infinite felicity and enjoyment conſiſt. Hence *divine love* is ſpoken of, in ſcripture, with this mark of diſtinction—that it is exerciſed toward *the wicked, the ill-deſerving*. And the Deity, when he purpoſeth a manifeſtation of love *which ſhall ſhew itſelf to be divine*, in diſtinction from any thing which ever appeared here in our fallen world, in the characters moſt eſteemed and revered among men; ſingleth out the *ungodly* for the ſubjects of it: herein commending his love towards us, that *while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us*. Rom. v. 8.

3. The love of a friend is manifeſted by the hazards to which he will expoſe himſelf, and the dangers and ſufferings to which he will ſubmit, for us. The ſtrength of love appeareth, in that which it will do for us. Adverſity trieth the ſtrength of friendſhip, by adminiſtering peculiar opportunities for its exerciſe and aſſiſtance. Hence the vulgar proverb, *A friend in need, is a friend indeed*. The ſame ſentiment

is thus expreſſed by the wiſe man, Prov. xvii. 17. "A friend loveth *at all times*, and a brother is born for *adverſity*." Nothing ſo endeareth any one to us, as his cordial friendſhip, and the tokens of a ſtedfaſt, unalterable affection and love, when we are forſaken, deſtitute, and in diſtreſs: nothing diſcovereth ſuch ſtrength and fervor of affection, ſuch cloſe and intimate union of heart to us. Thus the tender and ſoothing friendſhip, the kind aſſiſtance and generous confidence, of an affectionate huſband, for a poor, weak, helpleſs woman, who is forſaken and abandoned of every other helper and friend, will be the moſt comforting cordial, and the ſtrongeſt teſtimony of connubial love; deſerving the moſt generous and grateful returns. And for a huſband, beholding a helpleſs yet ungrateful wife in ſome imminent danger, and incapable of being aſſiſted and relieved otherwiſe than at the hazard of his own ſafety and life; yet in theſe circumſtances to forget all her ingratitude and infidelity, and boldly, though calmly, plunge himſelf into the moſt imminent danger for her ſafety and relief, and actually reſcue and ſave her—how peculiarly tender and affecting would be her feelings—how ſoft and pleaſing her ſenſations, if ſhe had any gratitude, ingenuity and love! To find in a huſband to whom ſhe had been unfaithful, yet ſo tender, ſo endearing and faithful a friend; in whoſe love ſhe may confide, and to whoſe boſom ſhe is invited to return: to find, I ſay, in ſuch an one, an unalterable affection, and ſuch ſtrength of love as will brave and deſpiſe dangers for her ſafety; muſt certainly give ſo convincing a proof, ſo ſtrong a teſtimony, of unconquerable, invincible love, as cannot fail exceedingly to delight and raviſh the heart, where there are the leaſt remains of gratitude and love.

Under what figure or emblem is the divine love, towards his choſen ones, ſo often repreſented in the word of God, as this? The holy Spirit himſelf could find no other ſimilitude ſo aptly to expreſs *to our underſtanding*

derſtanding and comprehenſion the wonderful ſtrength, extent and freedom of the divine love. Chriſt Jeſus himſelf is frequently repreſented as a bridegroom; and the church, his ſpouſe. When He beheld us in our infinitely ruined and guilty ſtate, purſued by the wrath and vengeance of Almighty God; notwithſtanding our baſe ingratitude, abominable proſtitution and infidelity, he not only calmly ventures into the midſt of danger, but even ſubmits to death itſelf, and ſuſtaineth the infinite weight of the divine wrath, for us, himſelf becoming a curſe, and bearing our ſins in his own body upon the tree, for us.* And now, having purchaſed redemption for his people, he, with infinite condeſcenſion and indulgence, inviteth us to put our truſt in him, and freely to caſt all our cares and burdens upon him—pouring our complaints into his boſom, with the fulleſt aſſurance of finding in him an infinitely powerful protector, and cordial, faithful and indulgent friend.

Nor is it the church, which is *redeemed from among men*, that alone receiveth the benefit of the great things done for ſinners: but the whole family in heaven have herein ſtronger teſtimonies, and more lively, affecting and engaging diſcoveries, of the infinite depth, perfection and purity of the DIVINE LOVE, than they would otherwiſe have been capable of receiving: which diſcoveries, doubtleſs, wonderfully open and enlarge their friendly and benevolent hearts, and exceedingly increaſe their felicity and joy in God. That this is verily the caſe, is evidently held forth in the parable of our bleſſed Lord concerning the loſt ſheep, Matt. xviii. 12. where it is repreſented as a peculiar ornament and teſtimony of the divine love,

* We are not to ſuppoſe that the *ſufferings* of Chriſt were, ſtrictly ſpeaking, *infinite*: though very extreme, they were nevertheleſs *finite*. The wrath which exiſts in the divine mind againſt ſinners, is really without bounds, and truly infinite. This diſpleaſure of God with ſinners, Chriſt endured in its natural and genuine effects: and *that* to ſuch a degree, and in ſuch meaſure, as, conſidering the infinite dignity of his perſon, were as really ſufficient to eſtabliſh the divine authority, and manifeſt God's infinite hatred of iniquity, as though this diſpleaſure had fallen on the ſinner, and ſunk him into endleſs perdition.

that "the Son of man came to ſave that which was loſt." The concern of the good ſhepherd for *one loſt ſheep*, is a teſtimony of his affection and regard for the flock; as it ſheweth what pains he will take to recover *even one*. So the divine Being, agreeable to this ſimilitude, manifeſteth, in the ſalvation of ſinners, not merely his love *to us*; but the infinite benevolence and goodneſs of his holy and pure nature in general, to the abundant joy and greater felicity of every virtuous being in the whole intelligent ſyſtem.

IV. Another valuable end, occaſioned by the exiſtence of moral evil, is the peculiar preparation to which it formeth ſuch imperfect creatures as men, for rejoicing in GOD, and beholding and enjoying the infinite beauty, riches and glory of his free and abundant grace. Nothing, like diſtreſs and a ſenſe of danger, prepareth the heart for reliſhing aſſiſtance and relief. Nothing, like a ſenſe of guilt, ingratitude and unworthineſs, formeth and fitteth the heart for rejoicing in *grace*. Such is the imperfection of human, and indeed of all created, nature, that things, to our view, are greatly illuſtrated by their oppoſites; and every character and quality appear heightened by contraſt. Thus hunger prepareth for reliſhing food; and ſickneſs, for enjoying health. So wearineſs prepares for reſt, and ſweetens it to us; and darkneſs, for making the light welcome and acceptable to us. Hence the *morning light* is a known emblem of joy; and the period of our ſorrows is often compared to the *fleeing of the ſhadows of the night*. Relief is never ſo acceptable and grateful, as when our diſtreſſes are at their height: and never is any ſo ready to acknowledge, and ſo prepared to behold, the glory of free, ſovereign grace, as when he hath the deepeſt ſenſe of his own infinite vileneſs and unworthineſs, and moſt ſenſibly feeleth his helpleſſneſs and dependence. Hence it is one of the characters of divine *grace*, which *particularly* recommendeth it, that its aſſiſtance and relief are ſo opportune—ſo peculiarly ſeaſonable and timely. Accordingly

cordingly we find it ſaid, Iſai. xlix. 8. "Thus ſaith "the Lord, in an *acceptable* time have I heard thee, "and in the day of ſalvation have I helped thee:" that is, when relief and aſſiſtance were moſt needful. Agreeably Chriſt is repreſented as being anointed "to preach good tidings—to proclaim the *acceptable* "year of the Lord—and *comfort all that mourn*." Iſai. lxi. 1, 2. Therefore it is that the evangelical Prophet, foreſeeing by faith the coming of "that juſt one," exclaimeth in thoſe tender and animating ſtrains, Iſai. lii. 7. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the "feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publiſheth "peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that ſaith "unto Zion, THY GOD REIGNETH."

Here are ſome few of thoſe valuable ends which appear to have been occaſioned by the exiſtence of moral evil, in the ſyſtem.

Now, that the taking place of ſin hath opened a wider and more extenſive field of operation, and ſpread a ſcene for a more full diſplay and manifeſtation, and ſtrong and clear diſcovery, of the divine perfections, is a fact, of which, I think, there cannot poſſibly be any doubt. The eternal deſtruction of ſinners, it cannot poſſibly be conceived, will be any *hindrance or obſtruction* to thoſe manifeſtations of the divine fulneſs, ſufficiency and goodneſs, which he will make towards the choſen veſſels of his mercy and grace. There is not the leaſt reaſon to imagine that the exiſtence of moral evil will be the occaſion of *preventing* the diſcovery of any thing *which is really in the Deity*, to his elect—the virtuous part of the ſyſtem of created intelligences. Nor can it be ſuppoſed that there will be any thing, *occaſioned by the taking place of ſin*, in any degree to obſtruct the ſaints' viſion of the divine perfection, and their apprehenſion and underſtanding of his character in its true beauty and excellencies, in the outward exhibitions which are made of it: unleſs, indeed, the eternal deſtruction of ſinners is a ſtain in the divine character, and the dark part of it, which

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ought to be kept, as much as poſſible, out of view
leſt it ſhould, in the apprehenſion of creatures, ſprea
a cloud over the ways of God, and draw a veil ove
the luſtre and brightneſs which would otherwiſe have
been made viſible to creatures, in the uninterrupted
reign of holineſs, and univerſal felicity and happineſs
of the creation. Now, however nigh this repreſenta-
tion of the matter may approach to the apprehenſions
which ſome entertain of the divine diſpenſations to-
wards his creatures, in the eternal deſtruction of ſin-
ners; yet nothing can be more palpably impious and
abſurd. On the contrary, it is an obvious and certain
truth, that punitive juſtice is a real and great excellen-
cy of the divine character; and that there is ſomething
infinitely amiable, grand and beautiful in the triumphs
of the GREAT KING over his obſtinate, impenitent
enemies. So far is the eternal deſtruction of ſinners
from obſcuring, in any degree, the divine perfections,
that it is an event which greatly illuſtrates them in
their infinite lovelineſs and true beauty. Creatures have
all the advantage for diſcovering the divine excellency
and glory, *in the exerciſes of his mercy and goodneſs to-
ward the choſen objects of his favour*, which they could
poſſibly have had, if there never had been any ſuch
thing as moral evil in the ſyſtem; yea, and if what
hath been ſaid is juſt, *far greater:* and, ſuperadded to
all this, they have the advantage of that full and abun-
dantly clear diſcovery which is made of the divine
purity, goodneſs and love, in the eternal deſtruction
of the wicked.

If, therefore, a fuller and more abundant diſcovery
and manifeſtation of the divine perfections, is a *greater
good*, than a leſs clear and viſible exhibition of them;
then, doubtleſs, the exiſtence of moral evil is the occa-
ſion of greater good. And if a more abundant and
extenſive exerciſe of *infinite excellency*, in the produc-
tion of its natural fruits and genuine effects, is a
greater good than a leſs extenſive exerciſe of it; it
will unqueſtionably follow, that *where* there is the
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moſt clear and abundant manifeſtation of the divine perfections, *there* is the greateſt good. To ſay that the moſt extenſive and abundant exerciſe of *infinite excellency*, in the production of its genuine fruits and effects, is not a greater good than a leſs full and extenſive exerciſe of it; is to ſay that *infinite excellency*, when it exerteth its productive influence, doth not tend to produce GOOD: or, that more and greater fruits of *infinite excellency* are not a *greater good* than leſs and more ſparing fruits of it: either of which is perfectly contradictory and abſurd.

Nothing, I apprehend, can be further neceſſary in order that the following propoſitions may gain univerſal credit and aſſent, than barely to have them *plainly expreſſed and underſtood*, viz. That the divine goodneſs and love, which *particularly appear* in God's oppoſing his enemies and ſuch as oppoſe themſelves to the public good, *could not have appeared* if there had been no enemies for him to oppoſe:—That the *advantage* of authority which is *particularly gained* by the everlaſting deſtruction of ſinners, *could never have been gained* had there been no ſinners to deſtroy:—That the infinite purity and holineſs, and the averſion of the divine mind to ſin, which is *particularly exerciſed and made manifeſt* in the puniſhment of ſinners, *could not have been exhibited in its fruits to the view of creatures*, if no ſuch thing as moral evil had come into exiſtence in the ſyſtem. Theſe are certainly manifeſt and ſelf-evident truths. There needeth no long chain of reaſoning to introduce us to the knowledge of them—no ſtring of metaphyſics to lead us to certainty in ſuch points as theſe.

From theſe conſiderations it indubitably and demonſtrably appeareth, that moral evil—the exiſtence of ſin—hath, in fact, been the occaſion of *far more and greater good* than ever could any otherwiſe have been produced.

But however clear and concluſive our *reaſoning and argumentation* may appear to be, in the preſent caſe;

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it will, probably, be more ſatisfactory to the minds of people, to find that the opinion, that *moral evil* is the occaſion of *greater good*, is an opinion evidently favoured by the expreſs declarations of *the word of God*; and that this idea is there plainly ſuggeſted to us.

When the matter is properly attended to and conſidered, it will probably appear that the ſcriptures are not wanting in their teſtimony to the truth of the opinion under conſideration. I ſhall, therefore, before I finiſh the ſection, mention a few texts of ſcripture which plainly and manifeſtly imply that the exiſtence of *moral evil* is the occaſion of *greater good*.

1. That the taking place of ſin hath been the occaſion of *greater good* in the ſyſtem, is manifeſtly implied in ſeveral things ſaid by the Apoſtle Paul, in the fifth chapter of his epiſtle to the Romans. Where he draweth the parallel between Adam and Chriſt; repreſenting them both as ſuſtaining a public character, and their conduct as having a vaſt and extenſive influence upon the ſeveral different public bodies of which theſe two perſons were the heads; he taketh ſpecial care that this grand diſtinction be preſerved and kept up, notwithſtanding the ſimilitude of their character in other reſpects, viz. That the *benefits and advantages* ariſing from Chriſt on the one hand, far outweigh and overbalance the *diſadvantages* ariſing from the ill conduct and wickedneſs of Adam, on the other. He ſays, ver. 15. "But *not* as the offence, ſo alſo is the *free* "*gift*. For if, through the offence of one, many be "dead; *much more* the grace of God, and the gift by "grace, which is by one man, Jeſus Chriſt, hath a-"bounded unto many." Here he intimateth, that *grace* aboundeth to a greater extent than the offence itſelf hath, over which grace is triumphing: that it extends farther than to a bare reparation of the damage done by the offence; making it the occaſion of *more good*—a more abundant flow of goodneſs and grace. And that this was a thing in deſign with the Deity, is very evident from what is ſaid in the 20th ver.

"Moreover,

"Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might "abound: but where ſin abounded, grace did *much* "*more* abound." Now if the taking place of ſin hath been the occaſion of the abounding of grace, it hath been the occaſion of the abounding of *Good*. That which doth not produce *good*, as the fruit of its exerciſe, cannot be *grace*. There is no *grace* in doing any thing wherein there is no *good*. But where *grace* is exerciſed, there, it is evident, *good* is produced as its effect. And if *grace* aboundeth, even beyond the *offence*; or, more than the offence itſelf which is the occaſion that grace is exerciſed; then, ſurely, there is more *good* effected by grace, than there was *evil* or *detriment* by the offence. If *grace* is *goodneſs*, and the *exerciſe* of grace, *doing* good; it cannot truly be ſaid, that *grace* hath abounded more than the *offence*, unleſs the *good* produced by it is greater than the *evil* or *detriment* occaſioned by the *offence*. But if grace more than repaireth the damage, and maketh good the loſs, ſuſtained by the offence; it is unqueſtionably true, that ſin hath been *the occaſion of greater good*. If the offence hath been the occaſion of the *grace*, it hath been the occaſion of all that hath been produced by this grace. And if *grace* is goodneſs, wherever it is exerciſed it *produceth* good. And if it hath abounded more than the *offence*, then the *good* which it hath produced is *greater* than the *evil* introduced by the *offence*. And if the *good* produced by *grace* is greater than the evil introduced by ſin, then ſin hath been the occaſion of *greater good* than would have been, if this event had never taken place.

Theſe reaſonings are plain, and, I am humbly of opinion, concluſive. It appeareth to be a main point, with the Apoſtle, to make it evident that the grace which is exerciſed through Chriſt, *more than maketh good* the damages occaſioned by the fall of Adam, and accruing from it. If ſin hath occaſioned the *abounding of grace*, it hath occaſioned the *abounding of goodneſs*. And if there is more *grace* exerciſed than there would

have been if there had been no ſuch thing as *moral evil* in the ſyſtem; there is, of conſequence, more *goodneſs* exerciſed than there would have been, had there been no moral evil. And if the divine goodneſs, when it is exerciſed, *doth good*, and is *productive of good*; the more the exerciſes of it *abound*, the *more good* is effected and produced. It is, therefore, a doctrine plainly taught by the Apoſtle, that ſin is the occaſion of greater good.* In this view of the matter the Pſalmiſt had good reaſon to ſay, as in Pſal. lxxvi. 10. "Surely "the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee: the remainder "of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain." He, doubtleſs, ſaw that the wickedneſs of men would be the occaſion of greater honour and glory to God, and in this way work his praiſes: which is juſt the ſame as to ſay, that it will be the occaſion of *greater Good*.

2. Our Saviour himſelf gave full teſtimony to this truth. It appeareth to be his deſign, by the parable of the loſt ſheep, Luke xv. to ſhew the peculiarly ſtrong and lively emotions of joy, which ſhall be occaſioned in heaven by the ſalvation of *ſinners*. He ſays, ver. 7. "I ſay unto you, that likewiſe joy ſhall be in hea-"ven over *one ſinner* that repenteth, more than over "ninety and nine *juſt perſons* which need no repent-"ance." The inhabitants of heaven, being perfectly *benevolent*, rejoice moſt in the *greateſt good*. *A leſs good* cannot occaſion more joy in them, than a *greater*: this would be inconſiſtent with the perfect benevolence of

* This is the conſtruction which Dr. Taylor repeatedly puts on the text under conſideration. *He* thinks it abundantly manifeſt, that it was the deſign and purpoſe of the Apoſtle, in the parallel which he runneth between Adam and Chriſt, to preſerve this important diſtinction, viz. That the *benefits* accruing from the death of Chriſt *far outweigh and overbalance* the *diſadvantages* occaſioned by the fall of Adam. He tells us (in his Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, p. 39.) that "Something in the *free gift* in Chriſt, anſwereth to ſomething in "the *offence* of Adam. But have a care, ſaith the Apoſtle, you do not imagine "that they are, in all reſpects, parallel, and that the free gift is *juſt of the ſame* "*extent* with the offence and its conſequences. Though now I intend to draw "a compariſon betwixt them, yet you ought to know, that the *grace and benefits* "in the Redeemer OVERFLOW and ABOUND *far beyond* the conſequences, the "ill effects, of the firſt offence." So p. 44. that God hath "in Chriſt beſtow-"ed benefits and bleſſings upon mankind, of his mere favour, *far exceeding* and "*abounding beyond* the conſequences of Adam's ſin." To the ſame purpoſe doth the Doctor expreſs himſelf in p. 58. 239. and elſewhere in his book.

of their hearts. And if the ſalvation of *one ſinner* was not a *greater good* than the happineſs of *ninety and nine* juſt perſons who need no repentance; how is it conceivable that there ſhould be more joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine juſt perſons who need no repentance?

There is, undoubtedly, more goodneſs *exerciſed* in the ſalvation of *one ſinner*, than would or could have been in the happineſs of ninety and nine juſt perſons who need no repentance; and a brighter diſplay of all the divine perfections, which is the great good of the intellectual ſyſtem: otherwiſe it could not occaſion greater joy in the inhabitants of heaven, whoſe hearts rejoice *moſt* in the *greateſt good*. And if there is more goodneſs *exerciſed* in the former caſe, than in the latter; there is, of conſequence, *more good* actually effected and produced. If the *former* event was not a *greater good* than the latter; it would be utterly unaccountable that it ſhould occaſion greater joy in heaven—as being an event more pleaſing to the benevolent ſpirits who inhabit it. Accordingly,

3. The exerciſes of divine MERCY and GRACE are repreſented, in ſcripture, as the grand object in view, even in creation, and the great and ultimate end for which our world itſelf was made. Therefore Paul ſaith, Epheſ. iii. 8, 9, 10. "Unto me, who am leſs "than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, that I "ſhould preach among Gentiles the *unſearchable riches* "*of Chriſt*; and to make all men ſee what is the fel"lowſhip of the myſtery which from the beginning of "the world hath been hid in God, *who created all* "*things by Jeſus Chriſt: to the intent that now unto* "*principalities and powers, in heavenly places, might be* "*known* BY THE CHURCH *the manifold wiſdom of* "*God.*" The *church* is the medium through which this *manifold* wiſdom of God is to be ſeen, and to appear. *Therefore* is it repreſented, that God created all things *by Chriſt*, to ſhew the infinite importance of the *mediatorial character* in the divine ſyſtem of gov-

ernment and adminiſtration; and, that this character lay at the very bottom and foundation of *even the creation*. Accordingly Paul tells us, Coloſſ. i. 16. that "all things were created by him (Chriſt) and for him." And ver. 17. that "by him all things conſiſt." And ver. 15. that he is "the *firſt born* of every creature." And he is ſaid, Rev. iii. 14. to be "the *beginning* of the creation of God." And xiii. 8. he is ſtyled a "lamb ſlain from the *foundation* of the world." Theſe titles and epithets, and this manner of expreſſion, plainly lead us to conſider the inveſtiture of the ſecond perſon in the glorious Trinity with his mediatorial office and character, as being *original* in all God's works, and the foundation of them all; and, that the diſplay of the divine perfections, which is made *in this character*, was the *great and ultimate end* of creation. This is the GOOD which GOD deſigned to bring about and accompliſh, in and by the work of creation: which will by no means admit the ſuppoſition, that ſo *great good* could be effected in any other way. Nothing can be more abſurd and inconſiſtent with the divine perfections and character, than to ſuppoſe that a method of adminiſtration, and of the exhibition of the divine perfections, ſo *infinitely expenſive*, ſhould be choſen by the moſt perfect and conſummate wiſdom; unleſs *greater good* was to be effected *in this way*, than *could be* in any other. It is infinitely unlikely that the wiſe and good God ſhould make choice of ſo expenſive a way for accompliſhing an end, no better, and no more valuable, than might have been accompliſhed without this expence.

4. Chriſt Jeſus is ſaid to be the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. Heb. i. 3. Which words manifeſtly intimate a *ſpecial diſplay* of the divine excellencies and perfections—a *peculiar effulgency* of the divine glory, in the perſon and character of Chriſt. And if the exiſtence of moral evil hath been the occaſion of Chriſt's glorious undertaking; then it has, likewiſe, been the occaſion of the

ſpecial

ſpecial effulgence of the divine glory, and of the appearance of that peculiar brightneſs which ſhines forth in the great work of redemption. If Chriſt is the brightneſs of the Father's glory; the Godhead, then, is doubtleſs exhibiting itſelf to view with *ſpecial and peculiar clearneſs*, in the perſon, offices and character of Ghriſt. But can any imagine that God is doing ſomething *peculiarly for his honour and glory*, and which he deſigneth as a *ſpecial brightneſs and effulgence* of his infinitely perfect and excellent nature; and yet that *no ſpecial and peculiar good* is effected and produced? How doth or can the Deity moſt diſcover his glory, but in doing the *moſt good*—effecting the moſt excellent and valuable ends? Nothing can be more reproachful to God, than to ſuppoſe that there is a *ſpecial exerciſe* of his perfections, and a *particular manifeſtation* of them, in fruits; and yet that no *greater good*, no more *valuable ends*, are thereby effected and accompliſhed. This would be the ſame as to ſay, that the peculiar excellency and glory of the divine Being doth not conſiſt in an ability and diſpoſition to do the moſt excellent things.

5. Another argument in favour of the opinion under conſideration may be drawn from the expreſs, manifeſt deſign of the Deity, in raiſing up Pharaoh, and ſuffering ſo long his moſt bold, arrogant and daring oppoſition to him; and the very *great good* which was, through this means, accompliſhed.

It is very manifeſt that the oppoſition of Pharaoh and his people, to the God of Iſrael, turned out, in event, greatly to the honour of God. It was the occaſion of his being ſignally honoured, and wonderfully glorified. A *peculiar good* by this means was effected —a great and wonderful eſtabliſhment of his authority and ſupremacy—a fear of his great and glorious name —an extenſive ſpread of the knowledge of it—and a great awe and reverence of Jehovah begotten in the hearts of men. Theſe are ends peculiarly valuable and excellent, and worthy to be accompliſhed at great expence.

expence. Therefore God ſaith, Exod. ix. 16. "And "in very deed for this cauſe have I raiſed thee up, "for to ſhew in thee my power; and that my name "may be declared throughout all the earth."

Pharaoh and his people, who ſo oppreſſed Iſrael, very manifeſtly in figure repreſented ſatan and his children. They were deſigned as a figurative repreſentation of the powers of darkneſs, engaged againſt Chriſt and his glorious cauſe. The people of Iſrael, in a figure, repreſented the whole Church of Chriſt. Therefore it is that the ſaints in heaven, who have gotten the victory over ſatan, are repreſented, Rev. xv. 3. as ſinging the ſong of MOSES and the ſong of the Lamb. And if the oppoſition of Pharaoh and his people, to the God of Iſrael, was the occaſion of *greater good*; doubtleſs the oppoſition of ſatan and his followers, to Chriſt, will likewiſe be the occaſion of *greater good*. If the ſin of one is over-ruled to greater good, the ſin of another, alſo, is; and, without queſtion, the ſin of all. So that, upon the whole, it is abundantly evident, there will be more glory to God, and more good in the ſyſtem, than if ſin had never taken place.

Other arguments to the point in hand might be collected out of the holy ſcriptures; but I ſtudy brevity: and the obſervations which have been already made upon the expreſs declarations of the word of God, are ſufficient to ſhew, that the opinion of *greater good* being occaſioned by the exiſtence of moral evil, was not unknown to the ſacred writers; nor is this a doctrine of human invention, upon which the *ſcriptures* are ſilent, and into which they give us no light and information.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Shewing that it was, upon the whole, a desirable thing, that MORAL EVIL *should take place in the system.*

IF it is once admitted, that the existence of moral evil is the occasion of *greater good;* and that it was a *necessary means* of having the *greatest good* effected and produced; it will follow, of course, that it was, upon the whole, a desirable thing that such an event should take place in the intelligent system. If a greater good is, upon the whole, desirable, in preference to a less; then, doubtless, every thing which is necessary to the accomplishment of the greater good, is also desirable. To say that any end is, upon the whole, desirable, is to say that all the necessary means of the accomplishment of this end are also desirable. To say that any end is, upon the whole, desirable; and yet that the means through which alone this end is capable of being effected and accomplished, are, upon the whole, undesirable; is perfectly contradictory and absurd. For however undesirable the means may be, in themselves considered, and for their own sake; yet if the expence of the means is not equal to the gain attending the end; the means, however disagreeable in themselves, yet, upon the whole, and in a relative view of them, are desirable. If the *Good*, contained and comprehended in the final issue and event, outweighs and overbalanceth the evil attending the means which are *necessary* in order to the accomplishment of it; in that case the END, considered in its whole connexion, and in its necessary relation to the means whereby it is effected, may with truth and propriety be said to be *desirable and good.* And if the existence of moral evil is a necessary means of the *greater Good;* there can be no reasonable objection against the taking place of such an event; but, on the other

other hand, a *perfectly benevolent* heart would naturally and neceſſarily deſire the exiſtence of it.

Only, I requeſt that the following things may be carefully remembered and kept in mind, when I ſpeak of the *deſirableneſs* of ſuch an event.

1. That there is nothing in the *nature* of moral evil which is in itſelf deſirable; this, the argument under conſideration doth not ſuppoſe. There is nothing in the nature of ſin, but what is, *in itſelf and for its own ſake, infinitely abominable and hateful.* Sin is perfectly hateful in itſelf, and in its own nature, for being what it is, without any relation to any thing out of itſelf, either as *cauſe* or *effect.* Such is the *intrinſic nature* of ſin, that it is abſolutely impoſſible that *the pure and holy mind of God* ſhould view it otherwiſe than with the *moſt entire and perfect abhorrence.*

Nor is there any thing in ſin, *of whatever other event it may be the occaſion and means*, that is not altogether hateful and abominable in the eyes of *good and holy men.* Yea, let it be the occaſion of what elſe it will, it is *eſſential* to the character, and is one principal evidence, of true goodneſs, utterly to hate, abhor and deteſt it. And the more any one groweth in grace, and increaſeth in holineſs and nearneſs to God, the more will he neceſſarily hate ſin, and be diſpleaſed with it.

2. There is nothing in the *tendency* of ſin, on account of which it is deſirable. Whatever *Good*, ſin may be the *means* and *occaſion* of, through the over-ruling hand of infinite wiſdom and power; ſtill there is *no tendency* in moral evil itſelf to *any Good*, which might reaſonably induce any one to chooſe and prefer the exiſtence of it.

If the Deity taketh occaſion, from the exiſtence of moral evil, to bring about *any thing* which is valuable and good; it is by reſiſting the natural tendency of moral evil itſelf, and over-ruling it as a means of the accompliſhment of an end *directly the reverſe*

reverse of that, to which moral evil itself naturally tendeth.*

3. It is only in a *relative view* that the existence of moral evil can, with any propriety, be said to be desirable. It is easily conceivable that something, which is very evil and undesirable *in itself, and for its own sake*, may yet stand so related to something which is *in itself good and excellent*, as to make it, upon the whole, desirable. An event, which *for its own sake* is justly to be dreaded and abhorred, may, nevertheless, stand so related to another event, which is *in itself and for its own sake very desirable*, as to become the object of a virtuous and benevolent desire. There is nothing inconceivable in supposing the same event to be, in one view, desirable; and, in another, undesirable. A very strong and pregnant instance of this sort we have in the death of Christ. Such was his abhorrence of the sufferings which were before him, that he prayed the Father, that, "*if it were possible*, that cup might pass from him." Mat. xxvi. 39. And yet nothing is more evident than that this event, considered in all its consequences and connexions, was *chosen* and considered as being *desirable* by our blessed Lord. For when, his soul being troubled, he prayed, "Father, save me from this hour;" he immediately addeth, "But for "this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify "thy name." John xii. 27, 28. Here is an event, which, it is abundantly evident, our Saviour, *in one view of it*, exceedingly dreaded and abhorred; yet, *in another*, made the object of an actual preference and choice. To suffer God's displeasure, and die under *his* wrath, our Lord considered a very great evil; and

* "Sin in its own nature hath no tendency to *good*; 'tis not an apt medium, "hath no proper *efficacy*, to promote the glory of God: so far is it from a direct "contributing to it, that on the contrary it is most real dishonour to him. But "as a *black* ground in a picture, which in itself only defiles, when placed by art "sets off the brighter colours, and brightens their beauty; so the evil of sin, "which, considered absolutely, obscures the glory of God, yet, by the over-"ruling disposition of his providence, it serves to illustrate his name, and make "it *more glorious* in the esteem of reasonable creatures. *Without the sin of man, "there had been no place for the most perfect exercise of his goodness.*" (See *Bates on the harmony of the divine attributes*, edit. III. p. 81, 82.)

yet, in its real relation to that great and infinite *good* effected by the death of Chriſt, and its connexion with it, it was really *preferred* and *choſen* by our bleſſed Lord.

Theſe things being premiſed, I proceed to offer the following arguments to conſideration, in proof of its being *upon the whole* a deſirable thing that moral evil ſhould come into exiſtence.

It is abſolutely deſirable, in the nature of things, that the *greateſt good* ſhould be actually effected and produced. The idea of *good* always implieth *deſirableneſs*. Every thing which is *good*, is, in that view, and ſo far, deſirable: to ſuppoſe the contrary is contradictory and abſurd. The greater any conceivable *good* is, the more deſirable is it that it ſhould come into exiſtence. The *greateſt good*, therefore, is *moſt deſirable*; a heart perfectly benevolent and virtuous will moſt ardently deſire it, and be perfectly ſet upon it.

2. That which is deſirable, *upon the whole*, is deſirable conſidered *in all its relations, conſequences and connexions*. When an event may be ſaid, upon the whole, to be truly deſirable; all the means which are neceſſary to the exiſtence of that event, are alſo deſirable. To ſuppoſe any thing, though deſirable in itſelf and for its own ſake, yet, in a relative view and in connexion with the neceſſary means of its accompliſhment, undeſirable; is to ſuppoſe that *it is not, upon the whole*, all things being conſidered, a deſirable thing that the event ſhould come into exiſtence. But when an event, conſidered in all its relations and connexions, is really deſirable; *that* is a conſideration which rendereth it a deſirable thing that thoſe ſubordinate events, which are neceſſary means of its accompliſhment, ſhould alſo come into exiſtence. When we wiſh for an event, we wiſh for every thing which is neceſſary to that event, and neceſſarily connected with it. And though the means may be, in their nature and on their own account, undeſirable; yet, in a relative

view,

view, and conſidered as in connexion with the event, they are deſirable. Nor doth it argue any love to the means *for their own ſake*, for any one really to deſire and wiſh for them. This, alſo, may be illuſtrated by that very marvellous event, the death of Chriſt. The *crucifixion* of the Lord of glory; *conſidered as tranſacted by ſinners*, and being the ſtrongeſt oppoſition to infinite excellency and goodneſs, and a moſt ſurpriſing effect of the enmity of the hearts of men againſt God; was the moſt abominable and hateful event that was ever tranſacted here in our world: And yet this ſame event, conſidered in its relation to the glory of God and the ſalvation of ſinners, was the moſt deſirable and happy event that ever took place in any part of the ſyſtem. This being an event which hath ſo *favourable an aſpect upon the felicity of loſt men*; we do not hear mankind complain of it as *ſtrange doctrine*, *utterly inconſiſtent with the idea of the great and infinite evil of ſin*, to repreſent the death of Chriſt as being, *upon the whole*, a deſirable event. And if the crucifixion of our Lord was, upon the whole, a deſirable event; then that conduct of the Jews, which was neceſſary to the taking place of this event, was alſo deſirable. But this conduct of the Jews was, in itſelf, infinitely evil and ſinful; and, therefore, in itſelf, moſt abominable and hateful. Yet even this conduct, wicked and ſinful as it was, in the ſtate wherein things then actually were, and in its relation to that which was the great and principal end of the death of Chriſt, was unqueſtionably deſirable. Nor are men wont to exclaim againſt it as a doctrine tending to licentiouſneſs, when the crucifixion of our Lord is repreſented as upon the whole a deſirable event.——It therefore followeth,

3. That whatever ſtandeth in ſuch a relation to *an event which is deſirable upon the whole*, as to be eſſential to the exiſtence of that event, and a neceſſary means of its taking place, is, alſo, itſelf deſirable. It is deſirable that that event, whatever it is, ſhould take place, without which the greateſt good cannot be accompliſhed,

ed, and ſomething, which is upon the whole deſirable, cannot come into exiſtence. Whatever ſin, therefore, is a *neceſſary* means of the *greateſt good*, it is a deſirable thing that it ſhould exiſt and take place in event. But it hath been before ſhown, that ſin is the occaſion of greater good: yea, and that the imperfection of created nature is ſuch, that this greater good *could not* poſſibly be effected without the intervention of ſin, or the taking place of moral evil in the ſyſtem.

4. It is deſirable, in the nature of things, that the diſpoſition of the divine mind towards ſin, ſhould moſt clearly and fully appear to the views and apprehenſions of rational, intelligent creatures. That which is lovely and beautiful *in itſelf*, muſt alſo be lovely and beautiful *in its appearance*. That which is excellent *in its exiſtence*, muſt likewiſe be excellent *in its exerciſe*. *That* which it is a deſirable thing that it ſhould *exiſt*, is alſo a deſirable thing ſhould be *exerciſed*: for if the *exerciſe* is not deſirable, the *exiſtence* alſo is not deſirable. If it is, therefore, a deſirable thing that the *real hatred of the divine mind to ſin* ſhould *exiſt*, it is a deſirable thing that it ſhould be *exerciſed*. And if it is a deſirable thing that hatred of the divine mind to ſin ſhould be *manifeſted and appear*, it was a deſirable thing that there ſhould be *ſuitable objects* toward whom this diſpoſition of the divine mind might be manifeſted and appear. If it is a deſirable thing that the hatred of the divine mind to ſin ſhould be *exerciſed*, it is of courſe a deſirable thing that there ſhould be ſome proper objects toward whom to exerciſe it. And on whom is it poſſible that God ſhould exerciſe and manifeſt his hatred of ſin, but *the ſinner*? It is, therefore, in the nature of things, deſirable that ſuch beings as ſinners ſhould exiſt in the intelligent ſyſtem: conſequently, a deſirable thing that moral evil ſhould come into exiſtence.

5. That exerciſe of the divine goodneſs, which is, in ſcripture, by way of eminence, called GRACE, is repreſented as the very glory of the divine nature; and the diſplay and diſcovery of it, the great and prin-

cipal

cipal end of creation. And as it was, in the nature of things, desirable that *the riches of divine mercy and grace* should be manifested and displayed, and appear and be exhibited in their natural and genuine fruits; so it was desirable, in the nature of things, that there should exist, somewhere in the intelligent system, objects of *mercy* or of *grace*. It is easy to see that there could have been no room for *mercy* and *grace* to be exercised, had moral evil never taken place. The holy and virtuous, who never rebelled against God, though they have not in them any proper *desert* of that favour and goodness which is constantly exercised towards them; yet, it is very evident, are not properly objects of *mercy* and *grace*. The *mercy* and *grace* of God are exercised only toward sinners—the ill-deserving. The divine goodness never could have appeared in that peculiar glory and brightness, which, in scripture, are called GRACE, if there had been no sinners to become the subjects of it. And as *mercy* and *grace* are represented as being the *peculiar glory and perfection of God*; so was it peculiarly desirable that they should appear, and be exhibited in their fruits, to the views of intelligent creatures. And, therefore, it was a desirable thing, and what would be the object of the real wish of an infinitely benevolent heart, that there might be and exist a *proper and suitable occasion* for the exercise and discovery of that peculiarly beautiful and glorious attribute of God called *grace*: consequently it was really, in the nature of things, desirable that moral evil should take place. As it was, in the nature of things, desirable that the peculiar brightness and glory of the divine character should *appear*; so was it desirable that there should be some *medium* through which *creatures* might be enabled to behold it. Without *some medium*, it followeth from what hath been before said respecting the *natural imperfection inseparable from the very idea of* CREATURE, and the inability of *creatures* to behold and perceive the divine perfections any otherwise than as appearing in fruits and effects, that they

they never could behold and apprehend that in God, which is called his *grace*. There can be no *medium* through which creatures are capable of beholding divine *mercy* and *grace*, but *that unworthineſs* and *ill-deſert* there is in a ſinner. And *that unworthineſs and ill-deſert*, every one may ſee, cannot exiſt, unleſs there is a ſinner—unleſs moral evil taketh place.

If it is only acknowledged, that the *mercy* and *grace* of God are his *peculiar glory*, or a *peculiar brightneſs and full exerciſe* of his inherent excellency; it will manifeſtly follow, that the *exerciſes* of divine mercy and grace do *peculiar good* in the ſyſtem, and effect purpoſes and deſigns which are *peculiarly excellent*; being productive of a *more valuable end* than could have been effected without the diſcovery and exerciſe of them.

If the ſyſtem would have been *as perfect and complete* without moral evil; the divine character, of courſe, would have been *as excellent and beautiful* without *that* in it, which *peculiarly and eſpecially* appeareth and is manifeſted both in the exerciſes of his *mercy* and *grace*, and alſo in the eternal puniſhment of the wicked. For in a ſyſtem perfectly without ſin, there would never have been any occaſion for theſe *peculiar glories* of the Deity—this *ſplendor* of the divine character; nor, opportunity for the leaſt degree of the exerciſe thereof. And certainly the divine character would be as abſolutely perfect *without that* which *never could be exerciſed* and appear in fruits—there being no *poſſible opportunity* for it, as *with it*. And if, in the nature of things, the divine character might have been as abſolutely perfect and complete without *that* in God, which *peculiarly* appeareth and is manifeſted, both in the exerciſes of his *grace* toward the veſſels of his mercy, and the exerciſes of his power and juſtice toward the veſſels of his wrath; it then followeth, that this mercy and this juſtice, *in theſe peculiar exerciſes of them*, are not *eſſential* to the abſolute perfection of the divine character. If there might have been a ſyſtem *equally*

perfect

perfect as the present, *without sin or moral evil in it*; then there might have been a character *equally perfect* as that which now belongeth to Jehovah, i. e. absolutely complete and fitted for every excellency which could ever appear, and adequate to every valuable purpose which could ever be effected, without those *particular qualities* which are manifested in the exercises of *mercy*, and of *punitive justice*. And if it was possible that there should have been, in the nature of things, a character so absolute and complete, without *mercy and punitive justice*; then there is no necessity, *in the nature of things*, for the existence of these *peculiar attributes* and qualities. And if there is no necessity, in the nature of things, for the existence of them; then they do not exist by a necessity of nature. And if they do not exist by a necessity of nature, they are no part of the *being and character* of *Him* who doth exist by a necessity of nature—the *necessary* Being, who is God.

So inconsistent and atheistical is it, to suppose that there might, in the nature of things, have been *perfection* of character, i. e. *adequateness to the most valuable purposes and designs*, without *mercy* and *punitive justice!* (As, it is undoubtedly certain, *every* valuable purpose that could have been accomplished in a system perfectly free from moral evil, might have been effected without these attributes and qualities.) And *so* inconsistent and atheistical is it, therefore, to suppose that there might have been *perfection of design and operation* in the formation and management of a system entirely free from all moral evil and sin!

These considerations, I am humbly of opinion, do fully and clearly prove, that, upon the whole, it was a desirable thing that moral evil should come into existence: Yea, and that it must *of necessity* be so, and *could not* otherwise be, than that an infinitely perfect and benevolent Being would choose and prefer the *existence* of such an event.

It may, however, in some measure serve to illustrate the argument under consideration, and occasion its carrying

carrying more full conviction, to mention one or two of the evil and bad conſequences which will certainly follow from the ſuppoſition that the exiſtence of moral evil—the taking place of ſin—in the ſyſtem, is, upon the whole, an undeſirable event.

1. If it would really have been better, upon the whole, in the nature of things, that moral evil ſhould never have come into exiſtence; then God hath not ordered and diſpoſed things in ſo excellent a manner, and to ſo good advantage, as they might, in the nature of things, have been ordered and diſpoſed. To ſay that there *could not* have been a ſyſtem without ſin, and yet that ſuch a ſyſtem would have been moſt perfect and complete; is to ſay, that there *could not* have been a ſyſtem which was *abſolutely perfect*: And this is to ſay that *abſolute perfection* is an impoſſible thing; which at once denieth it to be in God, or in his ſyſtem of operation and adminiſtration. To ſay that there *could have been* ſuch a ſyſtem, and that ſuch an one would have been *more perfect*; is, therefore, to ſay that God hath not ordered and diſpoſed things in a manner *ſo* perfect and excellent as that wherein they are capable of being ordered and diſpoſed. Conſequently, the traces of *infinite wiſdom* and *conſummate ſkill* do not appear in the diſpoſition and arrangement of things under the preſent ſyſtem of government and adminiſtration:—But, I may rather ſay, the traces of *groſs over-ſight and miſtake*. Yea, and it will follow, that we have no reaſon, from any thing which we can ſee and behold, either in the word or works of *the God of Iſrael*, to conclude that he is abſolutely perfect; but the fulleſt aſſurance, on the contrary, that he is infinitely far from it.

2. If it is *in any degree* undeſirable, upon the whole, that moral evil ſhould come into exiſtence; it is a thing *infinitely* undeſirable. If the undeſirableneſs of ſuch an event is urged from the conſideration of the *evil nature* of ſin; the ſame argument, if it will prove any thing, will prove this event to be *infinitely* undeſirable,

firable, i. e. that it is, upon the whole, an *infinitely undesirable* thing that moral evil should ever come into existence. For if the undesirableness of the *existence and taking place* of such an event, ariseth from the consideration of the *evil nature and tendency of the event itself*; the undesirableness of its existence is, doubtless, in proportion to the *evil nature and tendency of sin*. But the nature and tendency of sin being perfectly evil, and infinitely so; any undesirableness of the existence of the event *arising from the nature of it*, must, also, be perfect and infinite. The argument, therefore, drawn from the *evil nature* of sin, to prove that it was an undesirable thing, upon the whole, that any such event should ever take place in the intellectual system; if it proveth any thing, will prove that, upon the whole, all things being considered, and the final issue of the present system and scene of operation being taken into view, it was a most perfectly—yea, even *infinitely* undesirable thing that there ever should be any such event.

3. If, therefore, the existence of moral evil in the system, was an event, on the whole, so exceedingly undesirable; good men will always regret and lament it, and be unhappy under the thought that such an event hath been ever suffered to intrude itself into existence. The more men increase in virtue and benevolence, the more do they increase in their aversion to the *nature and tendency* of sin. And the more their minds are opened and extended in the knowledge and view of truth, the more do they see and discern of the evil nature and tendency of sin. If, therefore, the existence of moral evil was, upon the whole, an undesirable event; the more good men increase in virtue and knowledge, the greater will be their solicitude, impatience and unhappiness. And when they arrive in a world of perfect virtue, and full and clear light; where all ignorance and error shall be done away, and every corrupt inclination and passion be mortified and suppressed; they will be entirely overwhelmed with

the deepeſt ſorrow and moſt perfect regret: and heaven, inſtead of being a place of light and joy, will afford them a more gloomy ſcene, and melancholy view and proſpect of things, than they ever yet imagined and beheld. An increaſe of light and greater maturity of virtue, inſtead of being a means of *increaſing* happineſs, as hath generally been ſuppoſed, will ſerve only more and more to convince of the *fatal* error which is in fact to be found in the ſyſtem of God: and the full light of eternity, inſtead of filling the ſoul with the moſt perfect pleaſure and delight, will give inexpreſſible pain and anguiſh of heart.

4. If it is an undeſirable thing upon the whole that moral evil ſhould take place, God himſelf, who hath an infinite love of righteouſneſs—of moral excellency and beauty, muſt be infinitely more croſſed and diſappointed in this event, than any or all other beings in the whole ſyſtem. The averſion of the divine mind to the evil nature of ſin, is infinitely greater than that of all created intelligences together. And if the thought of this event is fitted, and in its nature tendeth to give pain and anguiſh to the virtuous part of the *creation*, much, yea *infinitely* more is it fitted and doth it tend to give pain and anguiſh to the infinitely virtuous and all-comprehending mind of God. If the infinite and all-ſeeing mind of the Deity had the leaſt degree of reluctance to the exiſtence of ſuch an event in his ſyſtem; he had an *infinite* reluctance to it: for there is no property, quality or excellency of the divine mind, which is not infinite. And if the divine will was really and truly in oppoſition to the taking place of ſuch an event; of conſequence it was *infinitely oppoſed* by the coming into exiſtence of this event, and was *reſiſted* with ſuch an amazing degree of ſtrength and power as entirely fruſtrated, vanquiſhed and overcame it. So that, upon the principle of the real undeſirableneſs of the taking place of moral evil in the ſyſtem, JEHOVAH is the *moſt miſerable* being in the univerſe; and his glorious mind is overwhelmed with infinite

infinite ſorrow, grief and diſtreſs. Theſe conſiderations, I am humbly of opinion, do *clearly ſhew*—yea, *perfectly demonſtrate*, that in the view of the DEITY, that is, in the view of *impartial, perfect reaſon—ſtrict, exact truth*, it was not, on the whole, all things being conſidered, an *undeſirable thing* that moral evil ſhould come into exiſtence. And when it is proved, to the conviction of the underſtandings of men, that the exiſtence of ſuch an event, in the intellectual ſyſtem, was not, upon the whole, *undeſirable ;* people will meet with no difficulty, I apprehend, in admitting the reaſonableneſs of the ſuppoſition, of the *poſitive deſirableneſs* of the exiſtence and taking place of ſuch an event.

SECT. III.

Wherein it is ſhewn that ſuch a poſitive divine agency and diſpoſal, as would give INFALLIBLE CERTAINTY *to the exiſtence of* MORAL EVIL *in the ſyſtem, are not inconſiſtent with the purity and holineſs of God.*

IF ſuch a diſpoſal of things as ſhall give infallible certainty of the exiſtence of moral evil in the ſyſtem, and actually iſſue in that event ; and if God's adjuſting and arranging things in a manner and order tending to ſuch an iſſue ; is wiſe and proper—agreeable to the dictates of the moſt perfect and conſummate wiſdom—it will be abundantly manifeſt that ſuch a *poſitive diſpoſal and agency as would infallibly inſure the future exiſtence and taking place of moral evil in the ſyſtem*, is not inconſiſtent with the purity and holineſs of God. For,

I. That which is not inconſiſtent with perfect and conſummate wiſdom, is not inconſiſtent with the moſt perfect purity and holineſs. Whatever is not inconſiſtent with perfect wiſdom to *deſign, dictate and direct ;* is not inconſiſtent with the purity and holineſs of the moſt wiſe Being, to *effect and accompliſh*. Wiſdom never dictateth any thing, inconſiſtent with purity and

holineſs. Where wiſdom approveth, purity and holi
neſs equally approve. Whatever offendeth purity, i
forbidden by wiſdom : for theſe two attributes per
fectly harmonize with each other.

It is the part of *wiſdom* to form noble and excellen
deſigns ; and to deviſe the beſt means and methods fo
accompliſhing them. This ſeems to be the peculia
end and principal province of wiſdom. Noble an
excellent *ends*, together with a prudent adjuſtment an
adaptedneſs of *means* to the accompliſhment of them
are the ſtrongeſt teſtimonies and indications of wiſdom
In both theſe ways is the wiſdom of God indubitable
and unqueſtionably clear, in ſuch an adjuſtment an
diſpoſition of things as would give certain futurity to
the event in queſtion. For it hath been ſhown tha
the taking place of ſin hath been the occaſion of a
abundantly more perfect and complete exhibition o
the divine perfections, to the views of creatures ; an
a more full and perfect manifeſtation of them in their
proper and genuine fruits, than could poſſibly have
been made, if moral evil had never exiſted. And,
conſequently, that there is a more clear underſtanding,
and perfect and ſenſible perception of the divine excel-
lencies, in the ſyſtem of created intelligences, than
there would have been, if ſin had never taken place ;
and, of courſe, *more good done* in the ſyſtem. It hath
been ſhown that the exiſtence of moral evil hath been
the occaſion of *far more and greater good* in the ſyſtem ;
yea, of greater good than could poſſibly have been ef-
fected otherwiſe than by the intervention of moral
evil.

And if this is in fact the caſe, (which I beg leave,
after what hath been ſaid upon it, to conſider as being
certainly proved,) there is no room left to queſtion
the wiſdom of the *projection* of ſuch a ſyſtem as this,
in all the variety of its parts : or, to imagine that the
moral evil which taketh place in it, indicateth any want
of prudent foreſight and wiſe deſign. But rather, if
what hath been ſaid is juſt, the exiſtence of moral evil

in

in the ſyſtem, when the ſcene is ſo far opened to view as to enable us to judge of the iſſue of things, is a certain proof and pregnant inſtance of the conſummate wiſdom of the Grand Projector of this extended, complicated ſyſtem.

And when we conſider, farther, how a ſcene of guilt, miſery and wickedneſs prepares ſuch imperfect creatures as we are, for a proper and entire ſubmiſſion to God, and for apprehending the mercy and grace of God in their abundant riches and freedom; and moſt ſenſibly reliſhing and apprehending that ſalvation and relief which is provided for ſinful men, in the goſpel of Chriſt: I ſay, when we duly attend to theſe conſiderations, and give them their proper and juſt weight; we ſhall not have any occaſion to apprehend any *defect* of wiſdom, in the means and methods of God's own deviſing for effecting the greateſt good, and accompliſhing the moſt valuable ends of creation. But, on the contrary, if we examine with honeſt and upright hearts, we cannot but diſcern *in the preſent ſyſtem of divine adminiſtration and government*, notwithſtanding the moral evil which cometh into exiſtence under it, the ſtrongeſt marks and moſt evident traces of perfect, conſummate wiſdom and ſkill.

It is abundantly manifeſt, that God's adopting the preſent plan of operation, and ſyſtem of adminiſtration and government, hath *in fact* been the occaſion of the exiſtence of moral evil. And that God foreſaw this event, and foreſaw it to be infallibly connected with that particular exertion of his own power, which ſhould be productive of *ſuch a ſyſtem as he hath created*, is what cannot be denied, without avowed oppoſition to the word of God. Was this exertion of the divine *power* under the direction of *wiſdom?* Is it worthy the character and *wiſdom* of God, to form *ſuch a ſyſtem*, and *in ſuch a manner* to adjuſt and balance the various parts and proportions of it? But if a ſyſtem, ſo formed, balanced and adjuſted in its ſeveral proportions and parts as is *in fact* attended and followed by

by the taking place of ſin, is no reproach to the wiſdom of God *when actually appearing in event*; it is no reproach to the wiſdom of God, to ſuppoſe ſuch a ſyſtem to exiſt in *divine deſign*, even in a full, particular and perfect view of its being attended and followed by ſuch an event. If moral evil is not a real blemiſh in the *government* of God; it is as little ſo, conſidered as exiſting in *divine deſign*. Nothing can be wiſe, as appearing *in event*, which is unwiſe, as entertained *in deſign*. That which is no argument of a defect in wiſdom, when exiſting *in event*, will never argue any defect of wiſdom, as entertained *in purpoſe and deſign*. If it was wiſe in the Deity to enter upon a ſyſtem of operation, which ſhould *in fact* be accompanied and followed by ſuch an event; it was equally wiſe in him, actually to *fore-ordain* ſuch an event, and to diſpoſe and order things *with an expreſs purpoſe and deſign* to give infallible futurity to the exiſtence of moral evil—the taking place of ſin. And I ſee not how any one can ſuppoſe that ſuch a *divine agency* and *poſitive diſpoſal* of things as ſhall give infallible certainty to the exiſtence of ſuch an event, is any blemiſh in the character of the ſupreme Governor of the univerſe, or indicateth any defect of wiſdom in him, or is any way unworthy of him; without imagining that the moral evil now in the ſyſtem, is an *actual reproach* to God; rendering it impoſſible that intelligent creatures ſhould perfectly and entirely acquieſce in him.

To ſay that God did not foreſee any ſuch event as being *certainly and infallibly connected*, by way of conſequence, with his own *poſitive agency and diſpoſal*, is to relieve one attribute at the expence of another; which doth no honor to the name of God. But it is, on the other hand, moſt reproachful to him, to ſuppoſe that any thing which God hath ordered and done, rendereth *ſuch a ſalvo* needful for his character. On the other hand, it is exceedingly manifeſt, that whatever *in event* is no argument of defect of wiſdom in the ſyſtem and government of God, would be no argument

gument of any defect in wisdom, considered as entertained in *positive purpose and design*. If the event of moral evil, *when in actual existence*, doth in fact not render the divine wisdom questionable and suspicious; surely it can afford no pretext for calling the same wisdom in question, when considered as existing in *divine purpose and design*. To say otherwise, would be the same as to urge that the *less* is an argument of imperfection, where the *greater* is not:—a method of argumentation very ill adapted to administer conviction. He, therefore, who will be bold enough to venture on a full and confident belief that the present system, *in all and every of its parts and events*, is wisely ordered and disposed; need apprehend no danger in assuredly believing that *such a system, in all its parts*, did actually previously exist in *divine purpose and design*. Consequently, such a divine disposal as infallibly insured the existence and taking place of moral evil; yea, *and of set purpose and with express view* to this event; is no argument of any the least defect in the wisdom of God: and therefore is, in no way, inconsistent with his purity and holiness.

II. It is in no degree inconsistent with the divine purity, for the Deity to exert a positive agency for the production of *that* which is necessary in order to a more full and perfect discovery of the purity and holiness of God, and a more bright and glorious manifestation of it. Purity and holiness are not opposed by those exertions of divine power which are necessary in order to a more clear and perfect discovery, and a more full and complete exercise, of holiness and purity. God discovereth no liking and approbation of sin, in any exercises of power which have for their object and *final cause*, a more perfect discovery of the *hatred* and *aversion*, of his holy and pure nature, to sin. God doth not manifest an *approbation* of sin, in any thing which he doth with a view to render visible his *hatred* to it; and which, in fact, serveth as a medium *to creatures* of a more clear and perfect discovery of this

aversion

averſion and hatred. Theſe things are obvious.

Now, as was obſerved before, whatever is the actual iſſue and event of the divine operations, *that*, we may conclude, was the *final cauſe* and *reaſon* of them, and the object really in view in thoſe operations. The end which appeareth to be *eventually* anſwered, by the exiſtence and taking place of moral evil, was, doubtleſs, the *end in view* in thoſe operations and diſpoſals which were the cauſe and ground of the exiſtence of ſuch an event. But that the exiſtence of moral evil hath been the occaſion and reaſon of a fuller manifeſtation and clearer diſcovery of the ſpotleſs purity and holineſs of God, and the infinite oppoſition of the divine mind to ſin, than otherwiſe would have been ever made; is what cannot, I think, with the leaſt reaſon, be denied. We may, therefore, ſafely conclude, that *this was an object in view*, in that agency and thoſe divine operations which gave certainty to the future exiſtence of moral evil, and were the cauſe of it. Whether a manifeſtation of the hatred of God to ſin, and the infinite averſion of his holy and pure nature to moral evil, were the *only*, *or chief and principal*, end of this agency and operation, is not neceſſary to be determined: it is ſufficient, in the preſent caſe, if it appeareth that it was *an end* really and ultimately in view. For if it is manifeſt that any particular divine agency and diſpoſal had, for their object, a more perfect diſcovery of the infinite hatred and oppoſition of the divine mind to ſin; it will be abundantly evident, that ſuch an agency and diſpoſal are not repugnant to the divine purity; and, in their nature and operation, inconſiſtent with the divine hatred to ſin:—Unleſs, indeed, the infinitely wiſe and all-knowing God hath been guilty of ſo groſs an overſight and miſtake, as totally to ſubvert, by his own agency and operation, the very end, deſign and object in view, in that very agency and operation. But no one can imagine that the divine Being is capable of ſuch over ſight and miſtake. If, therefore, the exiſtence of moral evil hath

been

been the occaſion of a more perfect diſcovery and manifeſtation of the divine purity and hatred of ſin: and if we may ſafely conclude that this manifeſtation and diſcovery were the end in view—the objective ground of that divine agency and diſpoſal which gave certainty to the exiſtence of moral evil, and were the cauſe of it; it muſt then be abundantly manifeſt and clear, to any one who will examine with impartiality and candour, that ſuch a *divine agency and diſpoſal* of things as ſhould certainly be followed by the taking place of ſin, are, by no means, inconſiſtent with the divine purity and holineſs; but, on the contrary, in their iſſue and event, exhibit the ſtrongeſt evidences and moſt abundant teſtimonies of the infinite ſtrength of the oppoſition of the pure and holy nature of God, to ſin.

III. Whatever divine agency and diſpoſal are the occaſion and means of a more perfect and full diſcovery and manifeſtation of the *divine goodneſs and love*; are, in no meaſure, inconſiſtent with the purity and holineſs of God. The divine purity and holineſs ſummarily conſiſt in *love*. Whatever manifeſteth love, manifeſteth alſo holineſs and purity. Whatever manifeſteth a diſpoſition of mind, which hath for its object the *greateſt general good*; doth, to an equal degree, manifeſt *love*: for in ſuch a diſpoſition as this it is, that love primarily and eſſentially conſiſteth. But it hath been before proved, that moral evil is the occaſion of *greater good*, in the ſyſtem, than could otherwiſe have been effected and produced. Conſequently, a *purpoſe and deſign* in the divine mind, and *an agency and diſpoſal* of the divine hand, which ſhould be eventually introductory of moral evil, into the created ſyſtem; are no way inconſiſtent with the divine character, or repugnant to his holineſs, his purity, his love.

When God, in his moral kingdom and government, actually effecteth the *moſt excellent purpoſes and deſigns*; it very ill becometh his creatures, to find fault, and be diſſatisfied with the means and methods which his infinite wiſdom hath choſen for producing and accom-

pliſhing them. When *the end* is confeſſedly good, why will not that juſtify the means *by and through which* it was effected? He that is not, upon the whole, diſſatisfied with the *end accompliſhed*, will not be diſſatisfied with the *means whereby it is effected*: to find fault with the latter, will be inconſiſtent with his approbation of the former. He that is not diſſatisfied with that character of the Deity, of which ſin hath been the occaſion and means of a more perfect and full diſcovery and manifeſtation; will not be diſſatisfied with that character of the Deity, which exhibiteth him as diſpoſing things in his ſyſtem in ſuch a manner as ſhall inſure the exiſtence and taking place of ſin. He who is convinced that the *divine goodneſs and love* appear in a more ſtrong and glorious light than could have been, if moral evil never had taken place; will never ſuppoſe that ſuch a divine agency and diſpoſal as gave certain futurity to the exiſtence of ſuch an event, are inconſiſtent with the goodneſs and love of God. I may ſay farther: he who doth not imagine that the appearances and manifeſtations of the goodneſs and love of God *are actually leſſened and diminiſhed* by means of the exiſtence of moral evil, and the entrance of ſin into the ſyſtem; will never imagine ſuch a poſitive agency and diſpoſal as give certainty to this event, to be inconſiſtent with the goodneſs and love of God. For that which doth not, upon the whole, hinder and obſtruct the *appearances* of divine love; is not inconſiſtent with divine love. *That* muſt be a very ſtrange and uncommon kind of a repugnancy and oppoſition *to love*, and extremely weak—yea, *utterly without ſtrength*, ſo as even to ceaſe to be *oppoſition and repugnancy*; which, in its tendency and utmoſt exertion, doth not, in the leaſt degree, hinder and obſtruct the appearances and manifeſtations of love.

But will any one preſume to ſay that the *appearances* of divine love and goodneſs are actually diminiſhed and leſſened by *any thing* that doth exiſt, and hath, in fact, taken place? Any one that will ſay this, muſt

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of courſe ſay, that the divine character doth not *appear* to be abſolutely and in the higheſt degree perfect in goodneſs and love: which is at once to renounce JEHOVAH, the God of Iſrael. And if nothing which hath ever taken place, hath really leſſened and prevented the *appearances* of divine love; then nothing that has ever, in fact, taken place, hath been *in ſuch a ſenſe inconſiſtent* with the divine love, as to argue any *defect*, and indicate any *deficiency* of goodneſs, in God. And if nothing that hath ever taken place is, in this ſenſe, inconſiſtent with the goodneſs of God; then that diſpoſal and agency of his, which made certain the exiſtence of moral evil, were, in no degree, inconſiſtent with the divine goodneſs and love.

And upon the argument reſpecting a ſuppoſed inconſiſtency of a *divine agency and diſpoſal* in favour of the exiſtence of the event in queſtion, with the purity and holineſs of God; I would obſerve, once more,

IV. That no *mere exerciſe of power* doth at all, of itſelf, illuſtrate and diſplay *moral character*. By a mere diſcernment of the natural power—the ſtrength there is in the LORD of hoſts—we never could form any judgment of the qualities of his mind—his moral attributes and character. None of the exertions of the *mere power* of God, do, in themſelves abſolutely conſidered, either *oppoſe*, or *concur with*, the divine goodneſs. The only way wherein the exertions of *power* illuſtrate *character*, is by the ends which its exertions accompliſh—the purpoſes which they effect. If the exertions of *power* are under the direction of *wiſdom*; they are, then, conſiſtent with a perfect *moral character*: if they are not under the direction and guidance of *wiſdom*; they do, of courſe, diſcover *imperfection* of moral character. When exertions of *power* are not under the direction of *wiſe deſign*, they are a blemiſh in the moral character of the being whoſe exertions they are. But when *power* is exerted to *effect* excellent purpoſes and deſigns, it then ſerves as an ornament of the moral character, illuſtrating and diſplaying it.

If the preſent ſyſtem, in all its parts, is beautiful and excellent, and every way worthy the divine Architect; no exertions of the divine power, of which the preſent ſyſtem, *as it is*, is the fruit and effect, are inconſiſtent with any part of the moral character of God. * And if the exiſtence of moral evil is not ſuch a blemiſh in the ſyſtem, as to be a real blemiſh in the moral character of the glorious Contriver and Architect; it will manifeſtly follow, that a poſitive divine agency and diſpoſal, which ſhould have for their effect the exiſtence of moral evil, are neither a blemiſh in the moral character of God, nor inconſiſtent with any attribute of it. But if the exiſtence of ſin is the occaſion of *greater good*, conſidered merely as an event, diſtinct from its innate qualities, it doth honour to God. And if the exiſtence of this event, *in this view of it*, doth honour to God, being the occaſion of a more full and perfect diſcovery of the excellencies of his moral character; then the exertions of power, which are the cauſe and reaſon of the exiſtence of ſuch an effect, are ſo far from being reproachful to the purity and holineſs of God, that they rather ſerve to illuſtrate, eſtabliſh and confirm this infinitely excellent and glorious character.

SECT.

* We have, ſtrictly ſpeaking, no other idea of the *power* of GOD, than that of the connexion of events with his will. His *power* intendeth nothing more than *that will* of his which hath events which are its objects connected with it. But the *power* of God is generally reckoned not among his *moral attributes*. The *exerciſe* of this power is unqueſtionably under the direction of wiſdom, and therefore ſerveth to diſplay moral character: but, conſidered *merely as that with which ſuch events as are its objects are connected*, it is no part of the *moral character* of God. The WILL of God, which is the rule of duty to creatures, is his *benevolence* and *love*—that diſpoſition whereby he is neceſſarily pleaſed with love and benevolence in his creatures. And as this benevolence and love are the only *moral, ſpiritual beauty* of the divine nature; *by ſuch a diſpoſition only* is it poſſible for creatures to be ſpiritually united to him, and pleaſe and obey him. This lets us ſee that *that will* of the Deity which giveth exiſtence and being to events, and *that will* of his which is expreſſed in the precepts of his *moral law*, are no more the ſame, than the *power* and *the holy nature* of God are one and the ſame.

SECT. IV.

Objections conſidered and refuted.

ALTHOUGH an anſwer to the principal objections which can be made againſt the doctrine of a ſpecial divine agency and diſpoſal, giving infallible certainty to the future exiſtence of moral evil, hath been, as I apprehend, in a conſiderable meaſure anticipated, in the preceding ſections; a more particular and critical examination of them, however, may ſerve more fully to illuſtrate the ſubject under conſideration; and, probably, will not be unſatisfactory to the reader. This, therefore, ſhall be the ſubject of the preſent ſection.

OBJ. I. For God to put forth any poſitive exertions of his own divine and almighty power, which ſhould, either mediately or immediately, be productive of ſuch an *effect*; and, whereby he actually purpoſed and deſigned to bring *moral evil* into exiſtence, in the ſyſtem; neceſſarily importeth ſome degree of approbation of *moral evil itſelf*, in the divine mind. For if God doth not, in ſome degree, approve of ſin; why doth he put forth any act of his own divine, reſiſtleſs power, *with an expreſs purpoſe and deſign* to the exiſtence and taking place of ſuch an effect?

ANS. In order to invalidate effectually the objection before us, ſeveral things muſt be particularly conſidered. And I would obſerve,

1. That for God to put forth ſome poſitive exertion of his own divine power, which he deſigned ſhould be productive of the exiſtence of moral evil, by no means neceſſarily implieth any degree of approbation of ſin, or the leaſt reconcilableneſs of mind to the evil nature of it. There is nothing abſurd and inconſiſtent, as hath been before obſerved, in ſuppoſing that the ſame object, or event, ſhould be approved of and conſidered

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as being desirable *in one view of it;* and, at the same time, considered as being undesirable, and be greatly disapproved of, *in another*. Instances of this kind are not uncommon, among men. How often do we, with pleasure and cheerfulness, submit to pain and sufferings with a view to the attainment of some greater good, and the possession of higher degrees of felicity? And yet any one would be thought to reason in a manner very inconclusive and precipitant, who should go about to prove, by instances of this kind, that human nature is enamoured of misery, and that mankind are lovers of pain and suffering. And yet this conduct of mankind affordeth as much reason for concluding that *human nature* is reconciled to misery, as a positive divine disposal in favour of the existence of moral evil, doth, for concluding that the *divine nature* is reconciled to sin. If it is conceivable that human nature should *choose suffering and pain*, consistently with a perfect aversion and abhorrence of all suffering; it is equally conceivable that the divine Being may *choose and prefer* the existence of *moral evil*, consistently with his utter aversion and perfect abhorrence of all sin.

OBJ. The cases are far from being similar and parallel; and there is no pretext for reasoning from the one to the other. For *man* is but a weak, helpless and dependent creature, having a great degree of imperfection necessarily cleaving to him; and, therefore, may be *necessitated* to seek the highest felicity of *his* nature, through perils, suffering and danger. But this is infinitely far from being the case with the supreme Being; who is possessed of *infinite sufficiency and fulness*, and needeth no such *disagreeable means* of attaining *his* own highest felicity and enjoyment.

ANS. Whatever fulness and sufficiency there may be in God—as, doubtless, they are absolutely infinite and boundless; his dealings are, yet, with creatures who are *imperfect;* and the manifestations and communications which he is making of himself, are to creatures who are extremely dull of receiving and apprehending;

prehending; and who can discern the character of the Deity, and receive the knowledge of it, only through certain means adapted to their infirmity, weakness and imperfection. And, consequently, God himself, whatever is his own inherent sufficiency and fulness, if he will treat with such as *moral beings*, *and make himself known to them*, is *necessitated* (not by a *natural* necessity, out of himself, to which even the *first cause*, *the self-existent and omnipotent Being*, is not subject; but by a necessity of fitness—of reason and suitableness) to accommodate himself to *their weakness and imperfection*; and make use of such *means* of instruction and communication, as are best adapted to convey the knowledge of himself to creatures of *their* imperfect views and dull apprehension. This consideration may make it equally *necessary* (though not with the *very same kind* of necessity) for the Deity to make use of certain *means and instruments* for the accomplishment of *his* ends, which are *in their nature and for their own sakes* disagreeable to him; as for men to submit to things which are disagreeable and painful to them, in order to *their* highest felicity:—it being carefully kept in memory, however, that the *use* of these means is far from being, *in the same sense*, painful and disagreeable to the Deity, as actual pain and sufferings are disagreeable *to creatures*. It is, therefore, as supposable that the Deity should, by some positive exertions of his own, either mediately or immediately, bring moral evil into existence, consistently with his infinite hatred of moral evil, and the aversion of his own holy and pure nature, to the nature of all sin; as it is supposable that mankind, who love happiness and hate misery, should yet, *with pleasure and cheerfulness*, submit *to pain and sufferings*—it being essential to their very natures perfectly to hate and abhor misery and pain.

2. God assureth us, by the prophet Ezekiel, that he hath *no pleasure* in the death of the wicked—the death* of him that dieth; but that the wicked turn and live.

And,

* Chap. xviii. 23, 32. and xxxiii. 11.

And, by his Apoſtle, that he would have *all men* to be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.* And yet nothing is more evident than that there is a *poſitive agency* of God—*poſitive exertions of divine power*—in and for the eternal death and utter deſtruction of ſinners: therefore *poſitive exertions of his own divine and almighty power, for the production of an event in which He, himſelf, aſſureth us that he hath no pleaſure.* And if the Deity may put forth his own divine power, for the production of *one event* in which he hath no pleaſure; why may he not, alſo, for *another?* If he, by his own reſiſtleſs and almighty power, actually produceth the eternal deſtruction of a ſinner, without having *any pleaſure* in it, why is it not quite as ſuppoſable, and every way as agreeable to common ſenſe, that he ſhould, *by his own agency and power*, produce the exiſtence of moral evil, and *effect this* event, without the leaſt degree of *pleaſedneſs of mind* with it, or reconcilableneſs to the nature of it? It is as contrary to the nature of God to take pleaſure in the *miſery* of his creatures, as in their *ſins*. Yet he *effects* the former event, while Himſelf aſſureth us that he hath *no pleaſure* in it: Why, then, may he not, alſo, the latter; without our *charging* him with taking pleaſure in it?

So, alſo, there is as little apparent harmony between that *will* of the Deity, whereby he would have *all men* be ſaved, and many of the exertions of his *poſitive agency and power;* as there is, between *that will* of his whereby he really hateth ſin with an infinite hatred, and *thoſe poſitive exertions of power* whereby he, either mediately or immediately, bringeth moral evil into exiſtence. And yet the harmony of *will*, with the operation of *power* in the *former caſe*, no one will preſume to call in queſtion: *as unqueſtionable* is the harmony of *will*, with the exertions of *power*, in the latter.

The ſubſtance of the objection under conſideration is

* 1 Tim. ii. 4.

is really this, viz. That it is inconſiſtent with the purity and holineſs of God to put forth an act of *power*, which ſhall, either mediately or immediately, be productive of an effect that hath ſomething *in its nature* really repugnant to the nature of holineſs.

But will the objector abide by the opinion, that it is inconſiſtent with the nature, the purity and holineſs of God, to exert an act of his own almighty and reſiſtleſs power, which ſhall, either mediately or immediately, be productive of an effect containing ſomething in its nature repugnant to the nature of holineſs? It is evident in fact that thoſe exertions of divine power, which gave birth to creation, were, at leaſt, the primary and mediate cauſe of the exiſtence of moral evil. And no friend even to natural religion will deny that God had a perfect foreſight and knowledge of this event, as a *certain conſequence* of the exerciſe of that almighty power, which he actually put forth in producing creation.

Farthermore:—The Deity is conſtantly putting forth acts of that ſame almighty power which cauſed creation, in producing effects which, in their nature, are repugnant to the nature of holineſs: I mean, in the *preſervation* of ſinners. If ſinners are dependent on God for the *continuation* of their exiſtence; the *continuance* of their exiſtence is an effect of the *power* of God. And if the continuation of the exiſtence of a ſinner is an effect of ſome exertions of the power of God; then the *continuance of ſinful exiſtence* is an effect of divine exertion. And if the continuation of ſinful exiſtence is an effect of ſome exertions of divine power; then, of conſequence, *ſinful exiſtence itſelf—moral evil*—is the *effect*, of which ſome exertions of divine power are the *cauſe*. If the divine purity and holineſs, from ſomething in the very nature of theſe qualities, muſt neceſſarily lay a reſtraint upon ſuch exertions of divine power, as would neceſſarily be *productive*, *originally*, of ſinful exiſtence; the ſame attributes would, for the ſame reaſon, lay a reſtraint

upon the exertions of divine power, which ſhould have for their effect, *the continuation of the being of a ſinner —the preſervation of ſinful exiſtence*. If it is eſſential to the harmony of the divine attributes, that the *power* of God ſhould oppoſe the *exiſtence* of every event, the internal nature and quality of which is repugnant to *holineſs* and oppoſite to *the nature* of it; it is, of courſe, as eſſential to the harmony of the divine attributes, to oppoſe, in the exertions of his power, the *continuation* of ſinful exiſtence, as to oppoſe its *original creation and production*. For there is as real an oppoſition to holineſs, in the exertions of that power which cauſe the *preſervation of ſinful exiſtence* and *the continuation of its being*; as in thoſe exertions of power which have, for their effect, the *original creation and production* of ſinful exiſtence: or, rather, there is no oppoſition, at all, to holineſs, in either. If it is eſſential to the harmony of the divine attributes, that the *power* of God ſhould oppoſe the *exiſtence* of ſin, as really and in the ſame ſenſe wherein his pure and holy *nature* oppoſeth the *nature* of ſin; it muſt as neceſſarily oppoſe the *continuance* of this exiſtence, as the *beginning* of it. For that which carrieth in it no oppoſition to the *continuation* of ſinful exiſtence, containeth in it, no oppoſition to the *beginning* of ſuch exiſtence. If, therefore, God may, conſiſtently with his infinite hatred of ſin, and without importing the leaſt approbation of it, *preſerve ſinful nature and being in exiſtence*; he may, likewiſe, in perfect conſiſtency with his purity and holineſs, *produce* ſinful nature and being, *and bring it into exiſtence*. But the truth and conſiſtence of the *former* is witneſſed by *fact*, and atteſted by our *conſtant and daily* experience: it is, therefore, no valid objection againſt the truth of *any* doctrine, that it inferreth the reality and certainty of the *latter*.

OBJ. II. To ſuppoſe the Deity to exert any active power which is either the mediate or immediate *cauſe* of ſinful exiſtence, neceſſarily implieth a preference, in the divine mind, of the exiſtence and taking place of

of ſuch an event: And if the will of God *preferreth* this event; then, it is *in favour of it*: And if the divine will is in *favour of this event*; then, it *doth not oppoſe it*. But it is abundantly manifeſt that the divine Being is, every where in ſcripture repreſented as having an infinite oppoſition in his holy and pure nature—his *will*—to ſin: therefore, for him to have *a will* to *cauſe*, either mediately or immediately, the exiſtence *of ſomething* to which his *whole nature and will* are in perfect oppoſition; neceſſarily implieth *perfect oppoſition* in the will of God to itſelf. It muſt, therefore, of neceſſity be that God, either doth not hate ſin with an infinite hatred; or, that he never did put forth any act of power to *cauſe*, either mediately or immediately, the exiſtence of moral evil. But no one will preſume to aſſert the former: therefore, every one muſt neceſſarily be obliged to aſſent to the latter; which effectually ſubverteth the opinion under conſideration.

Ans. In order effectually to invalidate the objection before us, I would humbly ſubmit to conſideration, the few following obſervations: wherein, if the reader ſhould obſerve a repetition of ſome things which have been already advanced on the preſent argument, I would crave his candour and patience; offering this as my apology, that the nature of the objection requireth it.

1. There is nothing irrational or inconſiſtent in ſuppoſing *the ſame will*—the ſame uniform diſpoſition—to prefer an event *in one view of it*, and perfectly oppoſe, hate and abhor it, in another. Yea, it would argue inconſiſtency either to approve or diſapprove of the ſame object, in different and *oppoſite views* of it, at one and the ſame time. There cannot be a more pertinent inſtance to illuſtrate this obſervation, than the death and ſufferings of Chriſt. This was an event, in one view of it, very deſirable and glorious; in another, infinitely to be abominated and abhorred. In one view of it, it was an event the moſt honourable to the divine character of any one that ever yet took place:

in another, the moſt reproachful to God of any act that was ever perpetrated here in our fallen, rebellious world. *In one view of it*, for a man not heartily to approve of it and rejoice in it, would be a ſtrong and irrefragable argument of his enmity againſt God; *in another*, for him to fall in with it and approve of it, would be an argument as pregnant and irreſiſtible, of an utter diſaffection to him. The ſame uniform, harmonious diſpoſition, therefore, muſt, of neceſſity, approve of this event *in one view of it*; and utterly diſapprove of it *in another*. So the *holy* and *ſin-hating* God really approveth of this event, *complexly conſidered*; though it neceſſarily involved the moſt horrid and abominable wickedneſs in it: For this was an event which was brought about according to the *determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God*; and was *determined by the divine counſel to be done*.* Now if God before *determined* this fact to be done; if this event came into exiſtence according to his *determinate counſel*; it is abundantly manifeſt that the Deity may *determine* the exiſtence of an event, conſiſtently with his infinite hatred and abhorrence of it. And if God may *determine*, *in his own infinite mind*, that an event ſhall certainly exiſt, conſiſtently with his utter hatred and averſion of mind to it; he may likewiſe, unqueſtionably, put forth poſitive exertions of his own almighty power, which ſhall certainly iſſue, in event, in the exiſtence of moral evil, in perfect conſiſtency and harmony with that will of his whereby he infinitely hateth and abhorreth all ſin.

2. In thoſe exertions of the power of God, which iſſue in the exiſtence of moral evil, the object of the divine volition is far from being the ſame as the object of his will in his infinite hatred and averſion to ſin. And where *the objects* of volition or affection are not the ſame, but quite diverſe from each other; it is eſſential to the harmony of the diſpoſition with itſelf, and the uniformity of its exerciſes, that there ſhould be

* Acts ii. 20. and iv. 28.

be a proportionable diverſity of the volitions and affections themſelves. In producing all *effects*, of whatever kind, the *direct*, *immediate* object of divine volition, is, *the exertions of his own power*: The *mediate and ultimate object of divine volition*, is that end which appeareth, in the iſſue and event, to be effected and accompliſhed by means, or through the intervention, of that effect of which the exertions of the power in queſtion are the *cauſe*. And whenever the Deity *willeth* an exertion of *power* for the production of any *effect*; he, doubtleſs, *willeth* at the ſame time that event which, *ultimately and in the iſſue*, appeareth to have been produced and brought into exiſtence through the intervention and means of *that effect* which aroſe out of the exertions of the power in queſtion *as its cauſe*. Thus if the Deity exerteth an act of power, either mediately or immediately, to produce the exiſtence of moral evil; the *direct*, *immediate object* of divine volition, it is evident, in that caſe, is *the exertions of his own divine and almighty power*: God, directly and immediately, chooſeth to put forth ſuch certain, definite acts of power. But the *ultimate* object of the divine volition, in the exertions of the power in queſtion, is the effect which is *ultimately* produced or brought into exiſtence, by means of theſe exertions of power: and this is the *greater good*. The will of God *nextly and immediately* terminateth upon certain, definite exertions of his power; *ultimately*, upon the *greater good* in this way to be effected.

If theſe obſervations are juſt, I think it moſt manifeſtly appeareth, that there is not the leaſt degree of oppoſition of the divine will, in thoſe exertions of his power which produce, either mediately or immediately, the exiſtence of moral evil, to thoſe exerciſes of will, in God, whereby he hateth ſin with an infinite hatred: yea, ſo far from it, that there is the moſt evident agreement and harmony between them. To conſider moral evil as a fruit of the *divine diſpoſal*, God may *will* it; and yet, when conſidered in relation to the

the *human purpoſe and deſign in it*, infinitely hate and abhor it. This may be illuſtrated by the following example. God had threatened that he would ſend the King of Aſſyria, whom he ſtyleth the rod of his anger, "againſt an hypocritical nation; and againſt the people of my wrath (ſaith he) will I give a charge to "take the ſpoil, and to take the prey, and to tread "them down like the mire of the ſtreets. Howbeit, "*he meaneth not ſo, neither doth his heart think ſo; "but it is in his heart to deſtroy and cut off nations not "a few.*" Iſai. x. 5, 6, 7. Here it is evident that the Deity *willed* that deſtruction and deſolation which were made by this proud Aſſyrian. And it is not leſs abundantly evident, that he viewed his conduct, in deſtroying and laying waſte the cities of his people, with infinite hatred, abhorrence and contempt: for he ſaith (ver. 12.) "Wherefore it ſhall come to paſs, that when the "Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount "Zion, and on Jeruſalem, I will puniſh the fruit of the "ſtout heart of the King of Aſſyria, and the glory of his "high looks." And yet no one, I preſume, emboldened *by this inſtance*, will venture to exhibit a charge of inconſiſtency againſt God. Nevertheleſs, there is all the appearance of inconſiſtency in this conduct of the Deity, which is urged in the objection under conſideration againſt that divine agency reſpecting the exiſtence and taking place of moral evil, which is pleaded for in the preſent argument. And for the Deity to *will* a poſitive exertion of his own divine and almighty power, which ſhould be the *cauſe*, either mediately or immediately, of the exiſtence of moral evil, no more implieth any oppoſition *to that will* of his, whereby he hateth ſin with an infinite hatred; than the will whereby he put forth that power, by which he aſſiſted and ſtrengthened this King to deſtroy and lay waſte the cities of *his* people, contained ſome oppoſition to *that will* of his, whereby he looked upon this conduct of the proud Aſſyrian with infinite hatred and abhorrence.

It is by no means inconſiſtent, to ſuppoſe that the Deity

Deity may *will* an object, *on one account*, which he hateth and abhorreth, *on another:* this would argue no oppoſition of will to itſelf, or inconſiſtency in the Deity. It doth not appear in any degree inconſiſtent with the divine hatred of ſin, to ſuppoſe that God ſhould will the exiſtence of it, on account of ſomething entirely the reverſe of that for which he hateth and abhorreth it: or, that he ſhould chooſe the exiſtence of ſuch an event, for a reaſon exceeding diverſe from that, for which he is utterly and infinitely averſe to it. *Whatever other objections* may be of weight againſt God's actually *willing the exiſtence* of moral evil; yet, that it argueth inconſiſtency with *that will* of his whereby he hateth ſin with an infinite hatred, and oppoſition to it, can be of none; if it is poſſible that the exiſtence of ſuch an event ſhould be choſen *on one account*, and abhorred *on another*. And that it is poſſible that the exiſtence of ſuch an event ſhould be choſen *on one account*, and be abhorred and abominated *on another*, appeareth evident from inſtances which have already been adduced; particularly that of the death of Chriſt. The leaſt attention will convince any one, that this was an event *in ſome reſpects* exceedingly deſirable; *in others*, to be utterly deteſted and abhorred.

It hath alſo been already obſerved, that ſinful exiſtence is the only poſſible medium through which *creatures* can have that full and clear diſcernment and diſcovery of the purity, righteouſneſs and juſtice of God, which are exhibited in the eternal deſtruction of the ſinner. And as theſe perfections, in the Deity, are deſirable in themſelves and in their own nature; ſo they are in all the appearances and exhibitions of them: and, conſequently, it is deſirable that the moſt full and perfect diſcovery that can be, ſhould be made of them *to the views of creatures*. And if ſo, then ſinful exiſtence, *conſidered as a neceſſary medium of this diſcovery*, is deſirable. And if it is the only poſſible medium through which this full and perfect diſcovery could be made to the views of creatures; then, conſidered

ſidered merely under this predicament, *creatures* might deſire the exiſtence of ſuch an event, conſiſtently with their utter abhorrence of *the nature* of it. And if ſinful exiſtence is the only poſſible medium through which *creatures* can *receive* this moſt perfect and full diſcovery; then, of conſequence, it is the only poſſible medium through which the Deity *can make* this diſcovery *to creatures*. For it argueth no defect of *power* in the Deity, to ſay that he *cannot* make a diſcovery *to the views of creatures*, in a way wherein it is *impoſſible* for them to receive it. And if ſinful exiſtence is a *neceſſary medium* to ſo deſirable an end; for the Deity to will and deſire it *on this account and in this view of it*, argueth no inconſiſtency with *that will* of his whereby he abhorreth and deteſteth it; nor, oppoſition to it.

That, on account of which ſin is hateful and undeſirable, is *its tendency*, and the oppoſition of it to God. All ſin actively oppoſeth, and in effect denieth, the ſovereignty and ſupremacy of God. All ſin, in exact proportion to the degree of its ſinfulneſs, oppoſeth God; and oppoſeth that object and end, which were chiefly and ultimately in the view of the divine mind, in exerting his almighty power in the production of the created ſyſtem. There is no ſin in any thing, which hath in it no poſitive oppoſition to God, nor any degree of active tendency to an end diverſe from that which engaged the divine mind, when he put forth his almighty, irreſiſtible power, in producing the creation. On account of this tendency and oppoſition, ſin is infinitely to be deteſted and abhorred. But however evil and deteſtable ſin may be, on account of this oppoſition and tendency; it may, nevertheleſs, be excellently adapted as a *medium* through which a diſcovery may be made, to creatures, of the infinite averſion and hatred there is in the divine mind to that very tendency in ſin which conſtituteth the infinitely evil *nature* of it. And yet *becauſe it may be a means* of a more perfect and full diſcovery *to creatures*, of the infinite oppoſition of the divine mind to *the nature and tendency* of

of it; no one can infer from thence, with the leaſt appearance of reaſon, that there is, in fact, no oppoſition of tendency, in ſin, to the glory and ſupremacy of God. And if there is no inconſiſtency in ſuppoſing that ſin may be the occaſion and means of diſcovering ſomething which hath, in it, *perfect oppoſition to the nature of ſin*; there is, of courſe, no inconſiſtency of that *will* of God, which is manifeſted and neceſſarily implied in thoſe exertions of power, which are, either mediately or immediately, the *cauſe* of the exiſtence of moral evil; to that revealed will of his, whereby the Deity looketh on all ſin with infinite hatred and abhorrence: which conſideration, I think, is a ſufficient anſwer to the objection in queſtion.

Thus have I conſidered, I apprehend, the principal and moſt weighty, as well as moſt plauſible, objections which can be made againſt the doctrine of a *ſpecial, poſitive divine agency and diſpoſal* in favour of the exiſtence of *moral evil*. Whether the objections have been fairly and juſtly ſtated, and allowed their due weight, the candid, intelligent reader muſt judge. The objections which have been conſidered in the preſent ſection, both centre in nearly one and the ſame thing: but I thought it beſt to put them into theſe different forms, the rather that they might appear in their full ſtrength; and, alſo, that opportunity might be had for a more full and perfect confutation of them. Whether what hath been ſaid is *any confutation at all* of the principal objections againſt *a ſpecial divine agency and diſpoſal* in favour of the exiſtence of *moral evil*, and giving *infallible futurity and certainty* to the taking place of *ſin*, I ſhall now leave to the judgment and conſideration of others; and proceed to take the ſenſe of *the holy ſcriptures* on the important point before us.

SECT. V.

Containing ſome ſcripture evidence of a ſpecial divine agency and diſpoſal, giving infallible certainty to the exiſtence of moral evil.

WHAT hath been already ſaid upon the ſubject, very manifeſtly ſheweth the extravagancy and abſurdity of the ſuppoſition, that the taking place and coming into exiſtence of moral evil, was a thing out of the divine view, and altogether beſide the purpoſe and intention of God. And the holy ſcriptures are ſo far from repreſenting it as being contrary to the real purpoſe of God, that there ſhould ever be any ſuch event, that they plainly teach us the preordination of it, in the divine deſign; manifeſtly leading us to conſider the preſent ſyſtem, *as it is in all and every of its parts*, as the fruit of wiſe purpoſe and deſign. There are many things in the holy ſcriptures, which make it abundantly evident, not only that God *foreſaw* the exiſtence of ſuch an event; but that he alſo *foreordained and predetermined* it: And, that the taking place of ſin was an event which ſo fully entered into the divine deſign, and was ſo eſſential a part of it; that, without it, the great and principal end of creation itſelf could not be accompliſhed. Who can read over the word of God, and take into view, and carefully conſider, the great and marvellous work of redemption as there exhibited, in its glory and importance; without being ſeriouſly of opinion, that it was the real purpoſe of God, that moral evil ſhould come into the world? When we conſider the importance of the mediatorial character, in the ſyſtem; and how much it lieth at bottom of all the divine works; and remember how much the kingdom of redemption is repreſented as the grand end ultimately in view, in creation; it muſt, at leaſt, be very difficult for us to frame the apprehenſion,

ſion, in our own minds, that God had no poſitive purpoſes reſpecting the exiſtence and taking place of ſin. And to ſuppoſe that moral evil came into the world in *oppoſition* to a *poſitive purpoſe* of the divine mind reſpecting its exiſtence, a little attention will convince any one, is attended with conſequences at leaſt as embarraſſing and perplexing, as the ſuppoſition of a poſitive divine agency and diſpoſal in favour of the exiſtence of ſuch an event.

Can any one read over (for inſtance) the hiſtory of the family of Jacob until their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage under the hand of Moſes, without having it ſtrongly impreſſed upon his mind and underſtanding, that, for wiſe reaſons, thoſe ſhocking pieces of cruelty, barbarity and wickedneſs, which diſtinguiſh that particular period, were *predetermined and foreordained* of God. Reſpecting that unnatural piece of conduct of the ſons of Jacob, in ſelling their brother Joſeph, the good man himſelf directeth their view (under the confuſion into which his diſcovery of himſelf to them, in Egypt, had flung them) to the hand, and wiſe diſpoſal and agency, of God, in the whole affair. Thus he ſaith, Gen. xlv. 5. *Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourſelves, that ye ſold me hither; for God did ſend me before you, to preſerve life.* And ver. 8. *So now it was not you that ſent me hither, but God.* Upon this repreſentation of the matter, by Joſeph, to his brethren, we may remark the few following things:

1. That a poſitive efficiency and diſpoſal, in this affair, is manifeſtly aſcribed to God. There is no intimation of any way, whereby God ſent Joſeph into Egypt, otherwiſe than by poſitively diſpoſing things, in his providence, in that very way and manner in which they actually came to paſs. And ſuch a poſitive diſpoſal in favour of that event, is a diſpoſal of all that ſeries of events, in all their variety of circumſtances and connexions, through means of which that great event, which was the iſſue of all, finally took

place. And this is, certainly, a positive divine agency and dispofal, which had for its object, either mediately or immediately, the existence of moral evil.

2. The person who made these observations and reflections, and who ascribed so much to the divine agency in that remarkable scene and series of events, was, himself, a man of eminent piety and godliness. The history of his life furnisheth us with sufficient testimonials of his integrity and uprightness of heart. He shewed that he feared God—that he made the Lord his confidence and trust, under the uncommon trials and temptations which he was called to encounter, in the strange land. Therefore,

3. When Joseph's brethren were struck with a sense of their barbarity and wickedness in the treatment they had given him, we cannot suppose that, in order to assuage the grief, and mitigate the pain, of such a conviction, this *good man* had the least thought of directing their view to the hand of God in the affair, in such a sense and manner as should, in the least degree, obscure *their* wickedness, or lessen the criminality of it in their own eyes. This would be to take the blame of that wicked conduct off from them, and fix it upon God: a conduct of which we cannot reasonably suppose one of Joseph's character would be guilty.

4. What Joseph, therefore, had in view, was, not to abate their convictions, or diminish the sense which they had of their own wickedness; but, to bring the divine hand into view, and the real and great good which God had taken occasion, through means of their wickedness, to effect. This is the only method whereby relief can be administered to the penitent heart, pained and burdened with a sense of its wickedness. Nothing but a conviction of the divine agency and dispofal bounding, circumscribing and ascertaining every event, of whatever nature and kind, and directing all things, in the wisest manner, through the best adapted means, to the most happy and glorious issue, can entirely relieve the real pain, anxiety and distress of a proper and genuine conviction of sin. 5. If

5. If Joſeph conducted wiſely and prudently in this matter, it appeareth that the moſt proper and ſuitable method to relieve the broken, penitent and benevolent heart, of that anxiety and diſtreſs which muſt neceſſarily be occaſioned by an effectual, proper conviction of ſin, and a proſpect of the extenſive reign of wickedneſs here in our world, is, to bring the divine hand and agency particularly into view, and repreſent *every event, of whatever nature or kind*, as coming into exiſtence as a fruit of the divine diſpoſal, and under the direction and influence of his infinite and unerring wiſdom. The expreſſions here uſed, are ſuch as moſt manifeſtly lead us to conſider the wicked conduct of the brethren of Joſeph as *the effect* of which ſome poſitive divine diſpoſal and agency were *the cauſe*. He ſaith expreſſly, *So now it was not you that ſent me hither, but God.* It is true, that the ends of divine providence, and the views of Joſeph's brethren, in one and the ſame ſeries of events, were exceedingly the reverſe of each other. As he ſaith (Gen. l. 20.) *But as for you, ye thought evil againſt me; but God meant it unto good.* God's view in *diſpoſing*, and *their* view in *acting*, one and the ſame thing, were infinitely different from each other. But yet the poſitive diſpoſal and efficiency of God, iſſued in an event which *was* great wickedneſs in the actors of it.

The divine agency and diſpoſal, *as cauſe* of the exiſtence of moral evil *as its effect*, are ſpoken of in terms ſtill more ſtrong and expreſſive, relative to the conduct and wickedneſs of Pharaoh, the proud oppreſſor of the people of God. When God firſt ſent Moſes unto Pharaoh, to demand liberty for the people of Iſrael to go three days journey into the wilderneſs to do ſacrifice to JEHOVAH, he at the ſame time foretells the utter refuſal of this haughty tyrant; and ſaith expreſsly, (Exod. vii. 3.) I WILL HARDEN PHARAOH'S HEART, *and multiply my ſigns and my wonders in the land of Egypt.* Accordingly it is ſaid, (ver. 13.) *And he* HARDENED PHARAOH'S HEART, *that he hearkened not unto them.*

them. The ſame form of expreſſion is uſed reſpecting the ſame matter (Exod. ix. 12.) *And* THE LORD HARDENED THE HEART OF PHARAOH; *and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord ſpake by Moſes.* And when God foretelleth the farther plagues and ſtill forer judgments which he had prepared for Pharaoh, and was bringing upon him, he ſaith (ver. 16.) *And in very deed for this cauſe have I raiſed thee up, for to ſhew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.* It is difficult to find terms more ſtrongly and emphatically to expreſs a poſitive deſign and purpoſe, in the Deity, in favour of the exiſtence of moral evil, and a divine agency and diſpoſal giving infallible futurity and certainty to the exiſtence and taking place of a ſcene of wickedneſs moſt provoking to the holy God, and abominable and hateful in his eyes. He not only foretold the wickedneſs of Pharaoh as what *might* come to paſs, but as what ſhould *infallibly* come to paſs. Nor doth he repreſent barely his deſign *to ſuffer and permit it;* but, alſo, his poſitive purpoſe of *actually effecting, by ſome poſitive agency and diſpoſal of his own,* this hardneſs in Pharaoh's heart.

To ſay that God only *permitted* Pharaoh to harden his own heart, or, at moſt, no more than laid the *temptation* before him, by no means cometh up to the idea conveyed by the *poſitive, expreſs* declarations of the text: or, if it did, ſtill it would not in any meaſure relieve the difficulty, for the removal of which theſe ſoftening, lenient, timid expreſſions were invented. For,

1. If the divine Being had been as averſe to the taking place of Pharaoh's wickedneſs, as his holy and pure nature is to the nature of ſin; he could with infinite eaſe, have delivered and led forth the tribes of his people, without the leave of this haughty tyrant, or his being ever at all conſulted in the caſe.

2. If the Deity was really as averſe to the event of the ſin and wickedneſs of Pharaoh, as his *nature* is averſe

verſe to the *nature* of ſin ; he would ſurely never have *permitted* it, when his people might as well have been delivered, had he ſo ſeen fit, without ſuch a temptation ever having been laid before Pharaoh to tranſgreſs in a manner ſo bold and daring. And, leaſt of all, on this ſuppoſition, would he have laid *ſpecial occaſions and temptation* to ſin, before one ſo peculiarly apt and fitted to be drawn into the ſnare, as Pharaoh was ; but would have been particularly careful not to have adminiſtered any occaſion, in his providence, for increaſing the obſtinacy and rebellion of ſo hardened a ſinner.* Whereas,

3. The whole affair, as recorded by Moſes, carrieth in it the moſt manifeſt marks of deſign. Every circumſtance hath this appearance ; and all carry the face of a previous purpoſe, and poſitive intention, of the righteous Governor of the world, that, for ſome wiſe reaſons, all this horrid ſcene of wickedneſs ſhould actually come to paſs. Moſes, doubtleſs, had an equal concern for the honour and glory of the divine character, with thoſe who imagine it ſo reproachful to the Deity to conſider the taking place of moral evil as a *fruit* and *effect* of a poſitive divine agency and diſpoſal. And if he had once thought that the divine character would have been endangered, by repreſenting the wickedneſs

* If we ſuppoſe *that* will of the Deity, with which the exiſtence of thoſe events which are its objects is connected, and the exertions of which give *being* to any event, to be the ſame as his *preceptive will* to his creatures ; it is as really diſhonourable and reproachful to God, to ſay that he *permitteth* ſin, as to ſay that, by ſome *poſitive agency and diſpoſal*, He, either mediately or immediately, cauſeth the exiſtence of it. For it is as truly and infinitely contrary to the *preceptive will* of God, to *permit* ſin, as actually to *command* and *enjoin* it. But if the *creative* and *preceptive* will of God *are not the ſame*, we have no occaſion for the gentle (and, I may ſay, in this place inſignificant) term *permit*, in order to relieve our imaginations ; it implying no inconſiſtency to ſuppoſe that God, either mediately or immediately, by ſome exertions of his own almighty power, gave certainty to the exiſtence of moral evil. But be this as it will, the term *permit*, in this uſe and application of it, carrieth, every way, as real a reflection upon the moral character of God, as the terms *poſitive agency and diſpoſal* : the former implying ſome degree of that ſame reconcilableneſs of the divine mind to moral evil, which is apprehended to be implied in the latter. It is a term, therefore, in my humble opinion, which hath been improperly uſed ; tending to relieve only the *imaginations* of men ; and *that* by begetting in the mind an apprehenſion of certain powers, in creatures, which do not belong to them ; and, of a certain *neglect in providence*, and *careleſſneſs* in the divine mind, which are infinitely reproachful to him.

wickedneſs and obſtinacy of Pharaoh as the *effect*, of which a poſitive divine agency and diſpoſal were, either mediately or immediately, the *cauſe*; ſurely he would have expreſſed himſelf in a manner more cautious and guarded, on ſo delicate a ſubject; and not ſuffered his relation, as it unqueſtionably doth, to carry in it ſuch viſible marks of a poſitive divine purpoſe and deſign giving birth to a ſeries of the moſt bold and daring wickedneſs. Moſes could not have made uſe of terms more ſtrong and expreſſive, if he had actually deſigned to repreſent a poſitive divine agency and diſpoſal as giving previous infallible certainty to any ſcene or ſeries of events. And if all theſe expreſſions are to be ſo analyzed and ſubtilized, and perfectly interpreted away, as to convey no idea of its being more agreeable to the divine purpoſe and intention that this ſcene of wickedneſs ſhould take place, than the *nature and evil* of ſin are to the *holy and pure nature* of God; we muſt forever deſpair of determining any doctrine whatſoever by the word of God; nor ever preſume to receive the moſt plain, familiar and expreſs aſſertions of it, as a ſufficient authority for *any* opinion.

The deſign of God in raiſing up Pharaoh, as expreſſed in Exod. ix. 16. the Apoſtle Paul adduceth in proof of the doctrine, that *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy*; and quotes this very text in ſupport of it (Rom. ix. 17.) from whence he draweth this concluſion (ver. 18.) *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* Paul himſelf was not inſenſible of the objection which, at this diſtance of time, is made againſt a doctrine ſo unpopular as that of the abſolute ſovereignty of God, in the ſalvation and damnation of ſinners. Accordingly he ſtateth the objection, in the next words, in the ſame manner, and nearly under the ſame form, in which it is urged at the preſent day, againſt the ſame doctrine. He ſaith, *Thou wilt ſay then, why doth he yet find fault?*

For

For who hath reſiſted his will?—As much as to ſay, "If God, himſelf, hath hardened the heart of any one; "it is juſt as he made it, and, therefore, juſt as he "would have it be: and if it is juſt as God *would* "*have it be*, what pretence can there be that *his will is* "*reſiſted?* And how can there be any criminality or "offence, where there is no reſiſtance to the divine "will?" Here are the only two objections, of any conſiderable degree of plauſibility or weight, which any one can make againſt a poſitive divine agency and diſpoſal giving certain futurity to the exiſtence of moral evil. The *firſt* is, that, on this ſuppoſition, *God* hath no reaſon to find fault: the *ſecond*, that there is no evil or criminality in ſin. In order to remove theſe objections, and take off their force, Paul bringeth into view the abſolute ſupremacy and ſovereignty of God; and the unreaſonableneſs of the *creature*'s objecting againſt the *Creator*, *for any of his acts* in making the creature ſuch as he really is. He ſaith (ver. 21.) *Hath not the potter power over the clay of the ſame lump, to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour?* Before the veſſel is formed, there is nothing in the *lump* to determine one part unto diſhonour, more than another; or the contrary: which ſheweth that this ſimilitude was not made uſe of, in order to repreſent the right which God hath, *after he has actually formed the whole race of men in ſin*, to ſave, and to caſt off, according to his ſovereign, wiſe and arbitrary will. For mankind, being in ſin, were *already formed to be veſſels unto diſhonour*, i. e. deſerving of wrath: conſequently the ſovereignty of God, in ordaining who of *ſinful men* ſhall finally periſh, is not, with any propriety, repreſented by the ſovereignty of the potter in forming different veſſels out of one and the ſame lump. It muſt, therefore, be the evident purpoſe and deſign of the Apoſtle, to repreſent, and teach us, that our being *originally* either *holy* or *ſinful*, is not the *fruit* and *effect* of our own free will and choice; but that our firſt or original, either *holy* or *ſinful*, exer-

ciſes, are originated wholly by ſome foreign, extrinſic *cauſe*, and come into being *as its effect*. Veſſels made by the potter are, either unto honour, or unto diſhonour, merely and ſolely for being *what they are, and ſuch as they are ;* without any reference whatever being had to the deſign, purpoſe or ſkill of the potter. Juſt ſo of mankind ; they are either to honour, or to diſhonour, i. e. holy or ſinful, without any conſideration at all of the *cauſe* of their virtue or vice, whether it is internal or external ; in the Deity, or in themſelves. And *in this ſenſe* had God the ſame right to form one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour, as the potter hath over the clay : And *this* is but the natural conſequence, of what the ſcripture ſaith concerning Pharaoh, juſt quoted by the Apoſtle : EVEN FOR THIS SAME PURPOSE HAVE I RAISED THEE UP, &c.*

'Thus is the Apoſtle Paul as full in the doctrine of a poſitive divine efficiency and diſpoſal, giving certain futurity to the exiſtence of moral evil, as language can well expreſs : aſſerting that God *hardeneth* whom he will ; and, in proof of it, quoting the expreſs words of God himſelf to Pharaoh, wherein he ſignifieth to that cruel and obſtinate tyrant, that how great ſoever his oppoſition might be to the God of Iſrael, he was not able to fruſtrate and diſappoint his deſigns and counſels : for it was he, himſelf (the very God whom Pharaoh oppoſed) that raiſed him up, of expreſs purpoſe and deſign, *ſuch a creature as he was*, in order to lay the foundation of opening, to the beſt advantage, thoſe wonderful and marvellous ſcenes which were exhibited in the land of Egypt, in the delivery of his choſen people, and the deſtruction of their enemies. However

* It cannot with any propriety be urged, that it is *unjuſt* in God to bring moral beings into exiſtence in ſin. *Juſtice* or *injuſtice* are exerciſed only in *eſtimating* moral characters, and the conſequent *treatment* of the ſubjects of them. No *injuſtice* can be done, by the Deity, to any *creature*, where his character is not improperly eſtimated. When a being *poſſeſſeth* a moral character, and not before, he is ſuſceptible of *injuſtice* on account of it. But that exerciſe of the will, or power, of God, which hath for its object the exiſtence of a moral being, either ſinful, or holy, contains in it no *eſtimation* whatever of his character ; and, in the nature of things, can do him, neither *juſtice* nor the *contrary*.

However diſguſtful and unpopular this reaſoning of the Apoſtle may be in our day, the happy time, we hope, will come, when theſe ſcriptures, as well as others, ſhall be underſtood in their true ſimplicity, perſpicuity and beauty; and the Spirit of God be ſo plentifully poured out, that the paſſions and corruptions of men ſhall not be irritated by plain, evangelical truth!

There are various repreſentations in ſcripture, the plain and moſt natural conſtruction of which clearly convey the idea of ſome ſpecial divine efficiency and diſpoſal, *as cauſe*, of the exiſtence and taking place of moral evil, *as its effect*. We have an inſtance of this kind, which is very clear and illuſtrating, in the caſe of the king of Aſſyria. God calleth him *the rod of his anger*; and ſaith, that *the ſtaff in his hand*, i. e. the power by which this proud monarch ſmote and deſtroyed the nations, was God's own indignation. And God ſaith, that he will *ſend him againſt an hypocritical nation*; meaning the Jews; and that *he will give him a charge to take the ſpoil, and to take the prey, and to tread down like the mire of the ſtreets*. Then God mentioneth, by the Prophet, the great and exceedingly wide difference there was in the views of this haughty and aſpiring prince, from *his own* wiſe and righteous purpoſes in the ſame event and work. The Aſſyrian monarch would arrogate all the glory of his conqueſt to himſelf, and attribute it to the power of his own arm: whereas he was no more than a rod, in the hand of the wiſe and righteous Governor of the world, for correcting and chaſtiſing the people of Iſrael. Therefore God ſaith, that, *when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jeruſalem, I will puniſh the fruit of the ſtout heart of the king of Aſſyria, and the glory of his high looks*. But however effectual the appointment and diſpoſal of God might be, in the caſe; this, by no means, excuſed the *proud Aſſyrian* from the wickedneſs of which he was guilty in accompliſhing the purpoſes and decrees of God. Accord-

ingly we find that the Lord expoſtulates with him upon the exceeding unreaſonableneſs of his proud and arrogant boaſting, in the following manner. *Shall the ax boaſt itſelf againſt him that heweth therewith? Or ſhall the ſaw magnify itſelf againſt him that ſhaketh it? As if the rod ſhould ſhake itſelf againſt them that lift it up; or as if the ſtaff ſhould lift up itſelf as if it were no wood.* See the whole account in Iſai. Chap. x.

From this repreſentation of the matter it is abundantly evident, that the very actions and conduct of this aſpiring prince, which were ſo exceedingly provoking to God, and for which he was reſolved to puniſh him, were, nevertheleſs, moſt abſolutely and infallibly predetermined by the all-wiſe God. The deſigns of the Deity, in raiſing up one of ſuch a character, and the views of this wicked monarch in what he did in execution of the divine purpoſes and counſels, were infinitely diverſe from each other: ſo that, although *the thing was done* which God, in his counſel and by an efficient determination and unfruſtrable decree, had ordained ſhould come to paſs; yet man ſinned, and exceedingly provoked the Lord in doing it. And it is, indeed, very manifeſt, that the wiſe and benevolent purpoſes and deſigns of the Deity, in his kingdom and government, cannot be carried on and perfected, without the exiſtence and taking place of moral evil. And yet ſin is not the leſs odious and hateful, becauſe of its ſubſerviency to the divine purpoſes and deſigns; any more than the over-ruling hand of Divine Providence, in making the action of a man, which he deſigned as an injury to his neighbour, the means of ſome great and particular good to him, maketh that action leſs odious and criminal.

Farthermore: It is exceedingly manifeſt, that the greateſt piece of wickedneſs which hath been perpetrated here in our world, took place in event in conſequence of the divine counſel, and a ſpecial determination of the Deity giving infallible certainty and futurity to the event: I mean, the crucifixion of our bleſſed

bleſſed Lord. It is extremely difficult, if not impoſſible, for any one, who is not greatly prejudiced and ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed in favour of ſome *particular*, *darling* ſentiment, to read over the hiſtory, given in the holy ſcriptures, of this moſt horrid fact, without conceiving an idea of ſome poſitive divine determination giving abſolute certainty and futurity to this event. Thus is it ſaid (Acts ii. 23.) *Him being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.* Here it is repreſented that our Lord was delivered up, not only by the foreknowledge, but by the *determinate counſel of God*—a counſel which gave infallible certainty to the event. Accordingly we find our Lord himſelf ſaying, (Luke xxii. 22.) *And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined.* To the ſame purpoſe is it ſaid, (Acts iv. 27, 28.) *For of a truth againſt thy holy child Jeſus whom thou haſt anointed both* HEROD *and* PONTIUS PILATE *with the Gentiles and the people of Iſrael were gathered together. For to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel before determined to be done.* And in Acts iii. 17, 18. the crucifixion of Chriſt is repreſented as being an accompliſhment of the purpoſes of God, and a fulfilment of the deſigns of his providence. For Peter, addreſſing himſelf to the murderers of Chriſt, ſaith, *And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did alſo your rulers: but thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath fulfilled.*

How ſuch a determination and agency as theſe words do moſt infallibly imply, can, with the leaſt propriety, be applied to God, *in ſuch a caſe as this*, if he hath the ſame averſion to the taking place of any ſin, as he hath to the *evil nature and quality* of ſin, is quite inconceivable and incomprehenſible. And were it, in fact, the caſe, that the averſion of the divine mind to the coming into exiſtence of ſuch an event, and his averſion of nature to the nature of ſin, were

one

one and the ſame; we cannot ſee why Peter was not guilty of the moſt horrid blaſphemy, in uſing language as he did; and, in moſt manifeſtly aſcribing ſuch a purpoſe and determination to God, as is plainly inconſiſtent with the purity of God, and the averſion of his holy and pure nature to the nature of ſin. But if the averſion of the divine mind and will to the exiſtence and taking place of moral evil, and the averſion of his holy and pure nature to the nature of ſin, are not of equal extent, and one and the ſame; the whole controverſy is at an end, and the grand difficulty removed, which was in the way of admitting the ſuppoſition of ſuch a poſitive divine agency, efficiency and diſpoſal, as gives infallible certainty and futurity to the exiſtence of moral evil.

If the terms and phraſes made uſe of in the holy ſcriptures, and which have been referred to, in the preſent argument, do not imply ſome *poſitive determination* of the divine mind in favour of the exiſtence of ſuch events as he, nevertheleſs, chargeth upon men as the higheſt wickedneſs; I ſee not how it is in the power of language to do it. And if they can be ſo explained as to conſiſt with an equal averſion of the divine mind and will to the exiſtence of ſuch events, as there is in the *divine nature* to the *nature of moral evil*; it will be to no purpoſe to pretend to fix any preciſe meaning to terms, or ever endeavour to determine any point by reaſoning and argumentation. If ſuch like expreſſions as *God's hardening the hearts of men*, repeated over and over, and that with an expreſs declaration that God purpoſely and with this very deſign raiſed up men of hard hearts, that he might ſhew in them his power, and cauſe his name to be declared through the earth; and theſe very texts and expreſſions quoted and improved by an *inſpired writer*, in eſtabliſhing the doctrine of the abſolute ſovereignty of God in having mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, hardening; I ſay, if ſuch terms and expreſſions as theſe, reiterated and uſed with particular

emphaſis,

emphaſis, as terms of great importance in an argument upon ſome of the fundamental doctrines of revelation, can yet be ſo analyzed and explained, as to leave, in the minds of men, no apprehenſion that the ſovereign God and righteous Governor of the world is any more or otherwiſe reconciled to the exiſtence of moral evil, and its coming into the ſyſtem, than his holy and pure nature is to the nature of ſin; it will be forever in vain to attempt to decide any controverſy whatever by the word of God; and it will be utterly unſafe for any man to lay much weight upon it. But if the Deity hath not been, from eternity, as utterly and infinitely averſe, in his whole mind and will, to the exiſtence of ſuch an event, as his *moral nature* is, to the *moral quality* of it; the conſequence plainly is that when he expreſſeth his hatred of ſin, to his creatures, in his prohibitions of it, he doth not mean to expreſs to them, in theſe prohibitions, the infinite diſſatisfaction which the taking place of ſuch an event in his ſyſtem hath given him; or the irreconcilable averſion he eternally had to the *being* and *exiſtence* of ſuch an event.

That it was the *poſitive deſign and purpoſe* of God, that moral evil ſhould come into exiſtence in his ſyſtem, and even riſe to that aſtoniſhing height to which it hath riſen here in our world, what can be more evident from the word of God? Or how is it in the power of language to expreſs a poſitive divine purpoſe in favour of the exiſtence of ſuch an event, more fully than it is done in the word of God?

We ſee, moreover, that the whole work and fabrick of redemption, in its infinite beauty and vaſt extent, moſt evidently depended, for its accompliſhment, upon the taking place of moral evil. And that the Deity ſhould concert ſo marvellous and extenſive a plan of operation—a plan wherein the tranſcendent fulneſs, ſufficiency and glory of his own holy and pure nature, were to appear in a brighter light, and ſhine forth with a more glorious ſplendour than in all his other

other ways and works; I ſay, that the Deity ſhould concert ſuch a plan of operation, before even the foundation of the world (as it is abundantly evident that he did) and yet entertain no poſitive purpoſe that moral evil ſhould ever come into exiſtence, is what appeareth to me quite inconceivable and incomprehenſible. We have the moſt obvious reaſons, therefore, for concluding that there was, from eternity, a poſitive purpoſe, in the divine mind, that moral evil ſhould come into exiſtence.

CONCLUSION.

CONCLUSION.

UPON the whole, I am humbly of opinion, that the ſcheme of doctrine which implieth an infallible connexion in things, and an abſolute previous certainty of all events, as well in the moral as in the natural world, ſtandeth upon a firm and ſure baſis; and that, notwithſtanding the many hard and reproachful names with which it is loaded, and which at the preſent day are ſo liberally thrown out againſt it, it is capable of a juſt, ſolid and rational defence.

There is nothing in theſe doctrines, as hath been ſhown in the preceding ſections, tending in any degree to leſſen our apprehenſions of the exceeding evil, turpitude and hatefulneſs of ſin; or, furniſhing the ſinner with any juſt pretext and excuſe for his ſin. There is nothing in theſe ſentiments inconſiſtent with the ideas of deſert either of praiſe or blame; or that precludeth the uſe of means and the endeavours of men, and rendereth uſeleſs that wiſdom, prudence, ſagacity and foreſight, with which the Author of our beings hath endowed us. And there is nothing in this ſcheme of doctrine, I may farther add, that appeareth to reflect any reproach upon the moſt high God, or that implieth in it any thing inconſiſtent with his ſpotleſs purity and holineſs, rendering any of his diſpenſations dark, myſterious and unintelligible. On the other hand, I think it abundantly evident that the ſcheme of ſentiments, contained in the preceding pages, hath a very manifeſt and apparent tendency to raiſe and exalt our ideas of

the wiſdom, goodneſs, ſovereignty and ſupremacy of God; to convince us of the infinite extent, wiſdom and excellency of his government; and are excellently fitted, in their nature, to form our minds to an entire confidence in God, the great Governor of the world, a quiet ſubmiſſion to his will, and cheerful acquieſcence in *his* diſpoſals, however otherwiſe dark and myſterious they may appear to the narrow and extremely imperfect views of men. No other ſcheme of doctrine, as to me it appeareth, can ever reconcile the preſent ſyſtem as it is in all its parts, together with that ſcene of events which is actually furniſhed out to view, with perfect, conſummate wiſdom and ſkill, and infinite ſufficiency and abſolute ſupremacy. Upon any other ſcheme of doctrine, it muſt be a thing *upon the whole* greatly to be lamented, bewailed and deplored, that any ſuch thing as moral evil ever made its appearance in the intelligent ſyſtem; affording a view and proſpect of things that cannot fail of giving pain and diſtreſs to every pious and benevolent heart: and which, conſequently, muſt more nearly and ſenſibly affect the *divine mind;* filling it with deeper ſorrow, and infinitely more painful and pungent regret. A God ſubject to ſuch paſſions and feelings as theſe cannot be JEHOVAH, the God of Iſrael; but a mere creature of the imaginations of men, infinitely beneath him. On the other hand, ſuch is the extent of the divine wiſdom and power, and ſuch is the abſolute ſupremacy of God, that nothing can be more irrational and inconſiſtent, than to ſuppoſe that any one of that almoſt infinite variety of events which ever hath or will have taken place, doth yet come to paſs without the knowledge of God, or otherwiſe than under the direction of his all-powerful providence: or, in ſuch a ſenſe contrary to his will, as to give him the leaſt kind of uneaſineſs and pain; or, ſo that *upon the whole* it would really have been more pleaſing to him that ſuch an event never ſhould have come into exiſtence; or, that it ſhould have been, in any ſenſe or degree, different

different from what it actually is. And to admit the contrary ſuppoſition implieth many things, in it, as inconſiſtent with all our ideas of God, and as reproachful to his great name, as it is imagined or ſuppoſed are contained in the opinion reſpecting that divine agency and diſpoſal giving certain futurity to the exiſtence of moral evil, which hath been urged and defended in the foregoing ſections.

This view of the matter, alſo, which hath been exhibited in the preceding pages, tendeth greatly to illuſtrate and manifeſt the importance of the *mediatorial character* in the ſyſtem of God: and to convince us that there could not have been abſolute perfection of deſign, without the exiſtence of ſuch a character. If what hath been ſaid upon this ſubject may be for the honour of the divine Redeemer, the glory of his character, and a means of promoting his mediatorial purpoſes and deſigns; it will be a matter of but very little importance what is ſaid, or thought, of the writer. It hath not been my deſign to irritate, ſtigmatize or reproach: but my deſign hath been to vindicate that ſcheme of doctrine which, it appeared to me, is moſt manifeſtly contained in the *holy ſcriptures*; and freely and without reſtraint to expoſe, as far as I was able, the weakneſs and ſophiſtry of thoſe reaſons and arguments which have been made uſe of in order to overthrow and ſubvert it. But whatever may have been my own private views and deſigns, I am not inſenſible that I expoſe myſelf to cenſure, by advancing and endeavouring to defend a ſcheme of doctrine ſo obnoxious and unpopular as that which is contained in the preceding performance. However, I think I may *juſtly expect it* of thoſe who, upon peruſal of what I have offered on the ſubject, ſhall think fit to cenſure and condemn me, that they provide a clear and pertinent anſwer to the reaſonings by which I have endeavoured to ſupport my opinion. What weight is really to be laid on ſuch like reaſonings, and how far they

are concluſive and juſt; it is not for me to determine: but, ſuch as they are, they are now cheerfully ſubmitted to public inſpection; and the cauſe committed to Him who judgeth righteous judgment, and who, in his own time and way, will make his own *glorious truth* to triumph and prevail.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

AN

APPENDIX

TO THE PRECEDING

ESSAY;

CONTAINING

OBSERVATIONS

ON

Dr. Dana's Examination

OF THE LATE

REV. PRESIDENT EDWARDS'S

Inquiry on Freedom of Will,

CONTINUED.

A N

APPENDIX, &c.

SOON after the firſt publication of the preceding "Eſſay on Moral Agency," the public were preſented with Dr. Dana's "Examination of the late Rev. Preſident Edwards's Inquiry on Freedom of Will, Continued." But, as the arguments in favour of that hypotheſis reſpecting human liberty, which the Doctor advocated in his *firſt* examination, received but little additional ſupport from his *ſecond*; the public would not have been troubled with any remarks upon it, had not a new edition of the Eſſay been propoſed to the Author. Upon this propoſal being made, a number of reſpectable Gentlemen have given it as their opinion, that a few remarks might be made, to advantage, on the "Examination Continued." This will be attempted in the following Appendix.

The Author is not wholly inſenſible of the evils too commonly attendant on controverſial writings. Polemic writers are not without the paſſions and failings incident to human nature in general. Hence they are expoſed to leave *reaſoning* for *declamation*; and, ſometimes, quit the field of argument, for that of perſonal invective. It is much to be lamented that writings on the moſt grave and ſolemn ſubjects ſhould ever be ſullied by perſonal reflection. The cauſe of truth needs no ſuch weapons of defence: nor, doth it ever receive any advantage from them. The love of truth, ſuperior to every perſonal conſideration, is never inimical

imical to the perſon who, we may apprehend, has de-viated from the paths of truth.

Wiſhing not to depart from the ſpirit with which a controverſy on the important ſubject before us merits to be handled; the candour and attention of the public are requeſted, while we ſubmit to the peruſal of our readers the following obſervations on the ſubjects of *God's decree and agency*, and the *freedom and liberty of men*.

That men are the proper cauſes of their own acts of will, is an opinion eſpouſed by Dr. Dana. The cauſe of *moral* volitions, he conſiders as being in the mind itſelf which is the ſubject of them: and, thinks that he has offered ſufficient proof "that moral volitions proceed from a cauſe in moral agents." He aſſerts, that "moral agents are themſelves the efficients of their "own volitions."* He fully expreſſes it as his opinion, that "If the cauſe of the exerciſes and actions of "moral agents be not in themſelves, then the Deity "is the proper efficient cauſe of them."§ The Doctor ſuppoſeth there can be no *medium* betwixt a power of ſelf-determination in men, and the univerſal efficiency of God, with reſpect of human actions. Therefore he feels it to be important to eſtabliſh the doctrine of a power of ſelf-determination. But, Is this doctrine capable of defence? Will it admit of a rational ſupport? It is very immaterial, in the preſent caſe, whether we conſider the *agent*, the *man*, the *mind*, or the *will itſelf*, as the *cauſe* of internal, voluntary exerciſes. Whatever be the *cauſe*, it muſt be ſomething which is *voluntary* and *active*: otherwiſe it is immaterial whether the cauſe be internal, or external. For men to be the *involuntary* cauſes of their own acts of will, is no privilege—gives them no pre-eminence. If the cauſe of exerciſes of will in men be *involuntary*, it is of no importance to determine whether it be internal, or external. If our wills be moved by an *involuntary* cauſe; it matters not, as to our freedom, whether that cauſe

* p. 21, 25, 41, &c. § p. 22.

cauſe be within, or without :—be it which it may, it poſſeſſes none of the qualities of a cauſe—it doth nothing, it produceth no effect. To ſay that acts of will are the effect of an *involuntary*, is the ſame as to ſay that they are the effect of an *inactive*, cauſe : and, this is as much as to ſay that they are the effects of no cauſe at all, i. e. not effects. Accordingly, we find that the Doctor, though he ſtrenuouſly urges, and endeavours to defend, the doctrine of a power of ſelf-determination in men, does not plead that acts of will in moral agents are not *effects ;* or, that they come into exiſtence without a *cauſe :* but, that " moral agents themſelves are the *efficients* of their own volitions—that " moral volitions proceed from a *cauſe* in moral a- " gents."

If moral volitions proceed from a *cauſe* in the agents themſelves, this cauſe muſt be *voluntary ;* otherwiſe it could not *effect* acts of will. And, if it be a *voluntary cauſe*, it differs not from *an act of the will :* and, therefore, men are to be conſidered as the *cauſes* of their own acts of will, *by their own acts of will*—they are the *efficients* of their acts of will, *by acts of will.* If it be not by an act of will that the agent produceth his own acts of will ; By what act is it ?—How doth he produce them ? What doth a man *do* in order to produce an act of will ? If he *doth* any thing, he exerciſeth an act of will : and, therefore, exerciſeth an act of will, in order to produce an act of will. This muſt be the way in which moral agents *effect* their own acts of will. And yet, by the ſuppoſition, this act of will is exerciſed in order to produce the *firſt* act of will ; and muſt, therefore, be *antecedent to it.* It is the *cauſe* of an act of will that we are ſeeking after. *Cauſe* is always prior to *its effect.* Whatever is the *cauſe* of an act of will, muſt be prior to that act of will which is its *effect.* The *cauſe* of an act of will in a moral agent, muſt precede *that act of will* in the agent which is *effected by it.* But, acts of will in moral agents have not been *eternally* ſucceſſive—the *ſucceed-*

ing caused by the *preceding* one. We want the cause of the *first* in the *series*. To say that the *first* was *caused* or *effected* by an *antecedent one*, is a contradiction in terms. We might, with as much propriety, say that *this first caused* itself: and, therefore, that "volition springs from itself;" which the Doctor says "is a very different thing from saying that the *subject* "is the cause of it."* Let the reader judge whether it be different. If there be a difference, let it be pointed out. To say that the *first* act of will in a moral agent was caused by an act of will of this same moral agent, cannot be materially different from saying that the first act of will sprang from itself. And, if the *first* springs from itself, all the rest may as well. We are sensible that it is a contradiction in terms, to say that volition springs from itself—and, not less contradictory and absurd, to say that the volitions of moral agents spring from a voluntary cause in the agents themselves. But, this lies, and lies as a dead weight, upon the advocates for a power of self-determination: we are not answerable for it.

Would these gentlemen gain any advantage to their cause, by urging that it is not by acts of will, but in some other way, that moral agents *effect* their own volitions? If they would, let them take it, and welcome. If it be not by their own exertions that moral agents effect their acts of will, How is it? Do moral agents *do* any thing without *exertion?* And, have they any exertions besides voluntary ones? Can any thing they do without an act of will (could there be any such thing) be called *their act?* And, could *this* authorize us to consider them as the *causes* of their own acts of will? To say that men are the *involuntary* causes of their own acts of will, is the same as to say that they are *no causes at all* of them: and, this is to say that they are *not the causes* of their own acts of will.

The doctrine of a power of self-determination, or of

* p. 42.

of a power in men to produce and effect their own acts of will, is every way embarrassed. In getting rid of one difficulty, we run directly upon another—Difficulties on every side incumber it.

Should we say that men are the *designing* causes of their own acts of will, it would afford no relief. If by *designing* cause, be meant *voluntary*, this would be the same as to say that men are the *designing* causes of their own *designs*—the *voluntary* causes of their own *volitions*. And, every one must see that this is saying nothing; or, nothing to the case.

When the Doctor offers himself as a professed advocate for a power of self-determination in men; it was surely incumbent on him to provide some tolerable answer to the objections. He ought to have shown the fallacy of the arguments which are urged as utterly subversive of every idea of such a power. He had these arguments before him, both in Mr. Edwards's Inquiry, and in the "Essay;" though, as he justly observes, "handled with more appearance of reason"* in the former. The reasonings against the existence and possibility of such a power, if capable of it, merit an answer:—without confuting them, no man ought to imagine he can write successfully in vindication of such a power.

But, we would not proceed too fast; nor forget that the Doctor progresseth in his argument in favour of the power in question, in his "Examination continued." In the first Section, which is written professedly on the subject of *self-determination*, he urgeth, as a proof of its existence, the power men have to *suspend, deliberate and examine*. It must be supposed that he here means a power in men to *suspend acts of will*: otherwise, How can this be an argument in favour of a power of *self-determination*? *Suspending* an act of will, is the same as *ceasing to will*. And, if men have not *this* power of suspending, they are, of course, *passive* in the *causes* of their exercises of will; and, there-

* p. 142.

fore, not *self-determined*—not themſelves the *efficients* of their own acts of will. If men have not a power *not to exerciſe* any act of will at all, What is this *ſuſpending power?* What aſſiſtance do men gain from it in *effecting* their own acts of will? If it be not a power *in this ſenſe to ſuſpend*, it is too late for any advantage to be derived from it in *cauſing* the act of the will. The act of the will has already gained exiſtence:—it has eſcaped the vigilance of this ſuſpending power, and gotten quite out of its reach.

But, what is this power men have of ſuſpending acts of will? Is it a power which *without any exerciſe—without any exertion*, produceth its effect—even the effect of a *total ſuppreſſion of volition?* This will not be pleaded: this would make the *power* nothing; and, the thing *effected by it*, nothing—a power which *doth nothing* and *effects nothing*. Such a power is worth nothing: no one will envy others the poſſeſſion of it.

If ſuſpending and deliberating are *voluntary*, they give no aſſiſtance to the power of ſelf-determination. The Doctor was aware of this objection. His anſwer is, "That a moral agent either hath power to *originate* an act of ſuſpenſion, and ſo bring himſelf into "the view of new motives; or the ſuſpending act "proceeds from a motive extant in the mind at the "ſame inſtant with ſome motive to immediate election "or action."*

The Doctor here ſpeaks of ſuſpenſion as *an act:* he muſt mean *an act of the mind, or will.* This act he ſuppoſes to be originated by the agent; or, to proceed from a motive extant in the mind at the ſame inſtant with ſome motive to immediate election or action. Perhaps the terms *election* and *action* are meant to be applied to *certain particular acts of the will* in diſtinction from *others*—to ſuch as the ſchoolmen term *imperate* in diſtinction from *immanent.* When the mind *deliberates* and is in a ſtate of *ſuſpenſe* with reſpect to *external*

* p. 18.

external action, *volition*, or *the immanent acts of the will*, are not *ſuſpended:* If they were, What kind of deliberation could there be in the caſe? So, when it *deliberates* with reſpect to the truth or propriety of any propoſition made to it, the *will* is not in a ſtate of *ſuſpenſe*, if the term mean any thing in oppoſition to *motion* and *action*. *Suſpenſion* and *deliberation* imply *volition*, as truly as *election* and *action*. Nor is it to be ſuppoſed that *that act* of the will which is implied by the term *deliberate*, is *moved and excited* by any motive whatever as its *cauſe*. *Motives* are not *cauſes* which by their own action and influence *move and excite* the will. *Reaſons* both *for* and *againſt* the choice of an object preſented to the intellectual view, may exiſt in the mind and be diſcerned by it at the ſame time. In this caſe men *deliberate;* but, not *without any act of will*. And, in this caſe, there is, on the whole, no motive to *immediate election;* and the will *is not determined to it*.

Two things muſt be taken for granted in the Doctor's argument, in order to give it weight, neither of which are true. The firſt is, that in *ſuſpenſion* of election and action there is no motion or exerciſe of the will: the ſecond is, that motives are cauſes of the exerciſes of will. If deliberating and ſuſpending with reſpect to ſome future election and action, be itſelf an act of will; this will no more prove the mind to be ſelf-determined, than any of its future elections and actions. A power of ſelf-determination may as well be inferred from thoſe volitions which are here termed *election* and *action*, as from thoſe in which it *deliberates* and *ſuſpends*. Beſtowing different names upon different acts of the will, contributes nothing to the argument in favour of a power of ſelf-determination. And if *motives* have no cauſal influence to produce acts of will, a variety of them may exiſt in the intellectual view at the ſame time that the will is in exerciſe with reſpect to other objects. The queſtion before us is not whether volition be *cauſed by the influence of motives* in

diſtinction

diſtinction from being *ſelf-determined*: but, whether the *cauſe* of human volition be *within the mind*, or *extrinſic* of it. And, that act of the will wherein we deliberate and ſuſpend with reſpect to ſome future election and action, no more takes place without a motive than any other act of the will: nor, is this motive any more excited by the mind, than the motives to its other exertions.

The Doctor ſpeaks of a power of *awakening in ourſelves motives to ſuſpend*. Does he mean that the ſuſpending act awakens its own motives, and then theſe motives produce the ſuſpenſion? Is there this agreeable play of mind and motive alternately operating—begetting, and then being begotten of each other? Or is the *originating* act with reſpect to ſuſpenſion without any motive, ſovereignly exerted in order to bring the mind within the reach of motives, that it may be governed by them? And are theſe motives, thus ſovereignly awakened, thoſe in the view of which the mind is determined to ſuſpend? Certainly not: but, thoſe acts of the will which are originated by the mind, are without motive, and ſovereignly put forth in order to awaken in this ſame mind motives to ſome future action.

If men awaken in themſelves motives to *ſuſpend*, the *originating*, *ſelf-determined* act of the mind, is not *the act of ſuſpenſion*, but *that act* which *awakens in the mind a motive* to ſuſpend. To originate an act of *ſuſpenſion*, and to *awaken in ourſelves motives* to ſuſpend, muſt be two very different acts. A power to perform the *firſt*, renders a power for the *laſt* quite unneceſſary. He who can *originate* an act of ſuſpenſion, has no need of a power to *awaken in himſelf motives* to ſuſpend. The *firſt* of theſe may be without a motive, as well as the *laſt*. And, where an *originating power* is poſſeſſed, the mind has no need of the round-about way of *firſt* ſovereignly conſtituting its motives, and *then* being influenced by them:—Eſpecially, as there might be danger in that caſe that the mind would *negative*

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the preſent motive to ſuſpenſion; and, have the ſame ground to go over again. How long this power of *awakening* and *negativing* motives, might retard the act of ſuſpenſion, is utterly uncertain. And, after all, this ſuſpending power is the proof that men poſſeſs a power of ſelf-determination!

Nothing, in ſhort, is more unintelligible than the idea of a *power in men to cauſe and produce* exerciſes of will in themſelves—a power back of the will, and behind it, puſhing and crowding it into action. And, yet this power muſt be exerciſed by men *in order to their putting forth acts of will:* conſequently, muſt be a power, the exerciſe of which implies and contains in it no act of will: and, therefore, men muſt be wholly involuntary in it, and in its exertions—a power, be it *in* or *out* of uſe, of which men can have no manner of conſciouſneſs or perception. This power is, perhaps, the ſame as the Doctor means by *moral capacity*. He tells us, "the author of our beings is the proper "cauſe of our moral capacity—this capacity, the effect "of his inſpiration, is the *proper cauſe* of volition."* This capacity, therefore, in order to be a proper *cauſe*, muſt be exerted. If it be not exerted, it can produce no effect. This the Doctor ſeems to allow: for, he immediately adds, "It may be well improved, or neglected and perverted." But, if it be exerciſed, it muſt be exerciſed *voluntarily;* otherwiſe, the acts of will conſequent upon it are the effects of an *involuntary cauſe*. And if ſo, How can moral agents, as the Doctor aſſerts,§ be themſelves the *efficients* of their own volitions? But, if this capacity be *voluntarily* exerted, How is it the *cauſe* of volition? Doth it cauſe that act of will whereby it is exerted in order to produce an act of will? Is the capacity the cauſe of that uſe of itſelf whereby it is *improved* or *neglected?* How, and in what way is it, that it muſt be improved, in order to its own improvement; or neglected, in order to the neglect and perverſion of itſelf? How moral

* p. 22. § p. 41.

moral capacity ſhould be the proper cauſe of volition, needs to be explained. Every attempt to explain ſuch a propoſition, however, muſt ſerve to confute it.

But no further argumentation, it may perhaps be thought, need be had on this ſubject. Nothing is more inconſiſtent with itſelf than the idea of *a power of ſelf-determination*. Language affords no phraſe, compoſed of ſo ſmall a number of terms, which contains more, or more palpable, abſurdities.

Before we leave the ſubject, however, it may not be impertinent to ſtate ſome of the *conſequences* which naturally flow from the ſuppoſed exiſtence of this power of ſelf-determination in men——a power of awakening in themſelves new motives, and negativing the old. If ſuch a power imply things inconſiſtent with acknowledged truths, and the plain declarations of the word of God; the exiſtence of it is not to be admitted, or ſuppoſed.

1. The admiſſion of this ſuppoſed power in men, effectually ſubverts the doctrine of the *divine decrees*. By the *decrees of God* are to be underſtood the *determination of his will* that certain objects or events ſhall exiſt. Whatever God hath *decreed* ſhall take place, *certainly will* take place: otherwiſe, his counſel will not ſtand. If his decree extend to human volitions, and to the free actions of men, thoſe volitions and actions of men which are the objects of ſuch a decree, will infallibly come into exiſtence. To ſuppoſe a *divine decree* conſiſtent with the uncertainty and contingency of the exiſtence of its object, is to make *it* nothing; or, to make the purpoſes of God with reſpect to the future exiſtence of objects and events, no more to be confided in, or relied on, than thoſe of weak, impotent men.

If there be indeed contingency and uncertainty with reſpect to the exiſtence of thoſe things which *God has declared ſhall* come to paſs; *his declaration* can afford no juſt ground of confidence, to his creatures. Yet, the declarations and predictions of the word of God,

extend

extend to the *voluntary actions and designs of men* :— yea, these are principal objects of the decrees of God revealed in his holy word : at least, there are a greater number of decrees and declarations respecting the free actions of men, and the events which necessarily involve and imply them, than with respect to any thing else. And if there be *uncertainty* with respect to their taking place, How can we confide in divine predictions ?

But if men have a power of *originating their own acts of will*—if they are themselves the *efficients of their own volitions*—if the intelligent spirit be *the cause of its own volitions*, How is it conceivable that the existence of these volitions should be made previously certain by a *divine decree* ? If a divine decree hath made the future existence of the acts of the will certain, the *exercise* of those acts of will is certainly and infallibly connected with the decree ; and, therefore, certainly and infallibly connected with something extrinsic of the moral agent who is the subject of them. If something extrinsic of moral agents has made the existence of their volitions certain, the existence of these volitions depends on *that* out of the agent himself which gave certain futurity to them.

On the other hand ; if men are the *efficients* of their own acts of will, and possess a power of *originating* them ; none but moral agents themselves can give existence to their acts of will. And, if no one but man can give existence to his acts of will, no one else can make their existence certain. But, if the existence and certainty of the volitions of men depend on the subjects of them ; their existence and certainty do not depend on the will and decree of God. And, if their existence do not depend on the will and decree of God, we may, then, determine there is no divine decree concerning them. What ideas can we have of a *divine decree* that certain human volitions shall take place, *which* nevertheless gives no certainty of their coming into existence, and *on which* their existence is independent ?

If human *volitions* are independent on the decree and will of God for their exiſtence; then, thoſe events, alſo, which are dependent on the volitions of men, and which cannot take place otherwiſe than as the effects of human volitions, muſt be equally independent on a divine decree. And, whatever comes into exiſtence independently of a divine decree, cannot be the object of ſuch a decree. On this hypotheſis, What is there left to be the object of a divine decree? To what latitude may we admit that the decrees extend? Surely, no further than to God's own immediate acts; or, thoſe things which He, either mediately or immediately, effects by his own almighty power.

But, to ſuppoſe human volitions to be *effected*, either mediately or immediately, by the power of God, will not admit men themſelves to be the *efficients*, the *cauſes* of their own acts of will. Therefore the divine decrees, it muſt not be admitted, extend to the *internal exerciſes* of man. Yet, the *external actions and conduct* of men depend on their internal exerciſes—their volitions. Neither may the latter, then, be the objects of a divine decree giving certainty to their exiſtence, any more than the former. To few things indeed, therefore, and thoſe the leaſt important in God's moral kingdom, may it be admitted that the decrees of God extend.

What, then, ſhall we make of our Bibles? And, what of the numberleſs *divine decrees* there publiſhed reſpecting human actions—the purpoſes and conduct of men? The taſk of reconciling the ſcripture-doctrine of the *divine decrees* with a ſelf-determining power in men with reſpect to their own acts of will, it may be preſumed will not be executed, or even undertaken, by the Doctor.

2. The admiſſion of this ſuppoſed power of ſelf-determination in men, not only ſubverts the *doctrine* of the *decrees* of God, but *that*, alſo, of his *foreknowledge*. The foreknowledge of the Deity implies a certainty of the exiſtence of the things foreknown.

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With reſpect to any event, the future exiſtence of which is uncertain, it *may be* that it ſhall never take place. And, if it may be that it ſhall never take place, it cannot, at the ſame time, be certain that it will ever exiſt. To ſay that it is *certain* that ſome particular event will exiſt, and yet it *may be* that it never ſhall come into exiſtence, is abſurd. It is the ſame as ſaying that it *is certain* that it will exiſt, and yet it *is uncertain* whether it will, or not. Whether the divine foreknowledge *cauſeth* the certainty of the future exiſtence of things foreknown, or not; it evidently ſuppoſes and *neceſſarily implies* this certainty. *Knowledge* implies *certainty*. When there is no *certainty* with reſpect to the future exiſtence of events, there can in the nature of things be no *knowledge* that they will exiſt. Uncertainty of the futurity of their exiſtence, neceſſarily precludes a *knowledge* of their future exiſtence.

Hence it is evident that there is *certainty* of the future exiſtence of every event which is the object of the *foreknowledge* of God. And, if the foreknowledge of God extend to all future events whatever, even all events which ever were future, as it certainly doth; it clearly follows, not only that there is *now* a *certainty* with reſpect to all future events which ever will be, that they ſhall take place; but, alſo, that with reſpect to all paſt events of every kind, there was an antecedent *certainty* of their exiſtence. This certainly follows upon the admiſſion of the abſolute univerſality of the divine foreknowledge reſpecting all events.

Whatever events are certain as to their future exiſtence, are ſo *neceſſarily and in their own nature*; or, their exiſtence *is made certain* by ſomething elſe. The certainty of their future exiſtence muſt lie in the things themſelves; or, it muſt ariſe from ſomething without them. But, if the events which are the objects of divine foreknowledge, are *in their own nature* certain of future exiſtence; their future exiſtence is, in the higheſt ſenſe, *neceſſary*; and, it is not, and cannot be,

in the power of any being or thing without them, to prevent their exiſtence. That which has certainty of future exiſtence aſide from any thing out of itſelf, cannot be prevented coming into exiſtence in any way whatever. But, to ſuppoſe this kind of certainty with reſpect to the events which are the objects of the divine foreknowledge, would introduce a moſt *abſolute fatality*—a fatality incontroulable by the Deity himſelf; and, a fatality, which, according to the advocates for a power of ſelf-determination, is utterly ſubverſive of every idea of human liberty.

It being admitted that there is *certainty* of the future exiſtence of all thoſe events which are the objects of the foreknowledge of God; it therefore follows, that the certainty of their exiſtence ariſes from ſomething *out of themſelves*. And, What other ſource of certainty of any future exiſtence can there be, than the decree or will of God? If there can be any other ſource of certainty of *that which now is not—which hath no exiſtence in itſelf*, Is God omnipotent? Is He the fountain of all being? Are all things dependent on Him, and on his will and pleaſure? Certainly, no: but, there is, and muſt be, ſome other original ſource of being and exiſtence—ſome other powerful and operating cauſe which brings forward events in their time and order.

If the *volitions* of men be the objects of the *foreknowledge* of God; it indubitably follows, that there is an antecedent *certainty* of their exiſtence. And, if there be an antecedent certainty of the exiſtence of thoſe volitions of men which are foreſeen by the Deity; the certainty of their exiſtence muſt be, either *dependent*, or *independent*, on the will of God. If it be independent on the will of God, there muſt of neceſſity be ſome other ſource of their exiſtence than the will, or power, of God: and, on whatever they are dependent, their exiſtence muſt be ſo connected with ſome cauſe out of themſelves, that they cannot be conſidered as contingent events.

To

To ſay that men are dependent on God for their *capacity* for volition and action ; but, that *volition* and *action* are dependent only on men who are the agents, will afford no relief ; unleſs it be denied that there is an antecedent certainty that human volitions and actions will, in fact, be what they are, and no other. If there be this antecedent certainty, it is then certain that men will exert their capacities in ſuch volitions and actions only as do take place : and, conſequently, previouſly certain that they would be exerted in one particular way, and in no other---An idea as utterly inconſiſtent with the Doctor's notions of liberty, as that of the moſt abſolute decrees.

But, if there be no antecedent certainty that the capacity for human volition and action will be exerted in ſome particular acts of will in diſtinction from all others ; there is, of courſe, no certainty that any particular acts of will, in diſtinction from all others, ſhall actually come into exiſtence. And, if there be, in fact, no antecedent certainty that thoſe acts of will which really do come into exiſtence, ſhall take place in diſtinction from all others ; it cannot, before they do exiſt, be known to be certain that they will exiſt. That which is, in itſelf, uncertain, cannot in the nature of things be known to be certain. To ſuppoſe even the Deity to *know* them to be certain, is to ſuppoſe that *his knowledge* is contrary to the reality and truth of things. The Deity can know things to be, no otherwiſe than they are. If human volitions are contingent *in diſtinction from being certainly and infallibly connected with ſome antecedent, extrinſic cauſe*, they can be known by the Deity no otherwiſe than as being contingent. And, this ſeems to be the light in which the Doctor views the foreknowledge of God as it reſpects the voluntary actions of men. For, he quotes, with approbation, the following paſſage from "*Abernethy's diſcourſe on divine omniſcience.*" "Foreknow-
"ledge has no influence at all upon the nature of
"things, to make the leaſt alteration in them. The
"events

" events which are neceſſary are foreknown as neceſ-
" ſary ; and thoſe which are contingent and voluntary,
" are foreknown no otherwiſe than as contingent and
" voluntary."* It cannot be ſuppoſed, that either this writer, or the Doctor, ſuppoſes that any *events* are *in their own nature* neceſſary, or neceſſary with that kind of neceſſity which is predicable of the divine exiſtence. This would be a ſentiment too groſs to be admitted by any chriſtian Divine. Not only ſo, but it would be moſt evidently and palpably contradictory to all the Author's ideas of human liberty. By *neceſſary* events, muſt, therefore, be underſtood, ſuch events as are certainly and infallibly connected, in their exiſtence, with ſome antecedent, extrinſic cauſe. By *contingent and voluntary* events, muſt, accordingly, be underſtood, ſuch events as are neither neceſſary in themſelves, and in their own nature, nor neceſſary by being infallibly connected in their exiſtence with any thing out of themſelves which now doth exiſt. In what other light can this Author be underſtood, when he ſpeaks of *contingent and voluntary* events, in diſtinction from thoſe which are *neceſſary?* To ſpeak of an *event*, that is, ſomething which hath *beginning of exiſtence*, as neceſſary in any other ſenſe than as infallibly and certainly connected with ſomething out of itſelf, antecedently exiſting, is an abſurdity. Conſequently, this cannot be the neceſſity to which *contingency* and *voluntarineſs* are oppoſed. We have, therefore, ſufficient authority to conclude, that by *contingent and voluntary events*, are meant ſuch events as are neither *neceſſary in themſelves by a neceſſity of nature*, nor *neceſſary by being certainly and infallibly connected, as to their exiſtence, with ſomething out of themſelves which doth now actually exiſt.* Theſe are the events which are foreknown by the Deity no otherwiſe than as contingent and voluntary. God's foreknowledge of them muſt, therefore, be a foreknowledge of an utter uncertainty of their future exiſtence ariſing, either

* p. 104.

either from any thing in the nature of the events themſelves, or from their connexion with any thing out of themſelves. And, where ſhall language be found more fully and ſtrongly to expreſs a *real uncertainty* of their future exiſtence? What knowledge, then, is it poſſible the Deity ſhould have relative to their future exiſtence, but a knowledge that it is utterly uncertain whether they will ever exiſt or not? But, are theſe the ideas we are to entertain of the divine foreknowledge? If ſo, What pre-eminency, as to the knowledge of many futurities, hath the Deity above men, yea, the weakeſt of men?

It is by no means ſuggeſted that theſe are really the ideas, either of Mr. Abernethy, or the Doctor. Undoubtedly they would, both, reprobate them. But, How will they avoid theſe conſequences upon the hypotheſis they adopt? If they can fairly rid themſelves of them in conſiſtency with their opinions reſpecting the contingency of human actions, they will do a very eſſential ſervice to the republic of letters. But, to reconcile divine preſcience with human liberty, (the Doctor undoubtedly means a power of ſelf-determination) he advertiſeth his readers in the beginning of his ſection, on foreknowledge, is a taſk which he is not about to undertake. He rather ſuppoſeth no human underſtanding capable of diſcerning their conſiſtency with each other. He ranks this with thoſe ſubjects which are "high and too wonderful for us;" ſuch as the divine *eternity* and *infinity*, the *trinity* and *ſatisfaction*, &c. But, would the Doctor ſuggeſt that there is the like apparent inconſiſtency and contradiction in theſe doctrines, as in the ſuppoſition that things which are in fact *contingent*, and *uncertain as to their future exiſtence*, ſhould be *foreknown?* How diſcouraging this to every attempt to vindicate theſe doctrines, and the ſcheme of chriſtianity in general, againſt the objections and cavils of infidels! Speaking of theſe doctrines, of the ſcheme of chriſtianity, and of the moral government of God, the Doctor ſays, "Al-

"though

"though we have ſuch evidence in general of the "truth and reality of the things above-mentioned, as "in a manner compels our belief; yet, when the "queſtion is put, How can theſe things be? we diſ-"cern *inſuperable difficulties*—at the ſame time we are "conſcious infidelity would involve us in difficulties "ſtill greater."* But, is the human race *fated* to ſuch *inſuperable difficulties*, which ever ſide of the queſtion be embraced, relative to the truth and doctrines of chriſtianity? Why has not the moſt perfect ſcepticiſm long ere now ſpread itſelf over the far greater part of the human race? When it is inquired how thoſe things which have been embraced and confeſſed by the chriſtian world in all ages can be; the Doctor ſays we diſcern *inſuperable difficulties*: but, at the ſame time the Doctor is confident that *infidelity* would involve in it ſtill *greater difficulties*; yea, he ſays that we are *conſcious* that it would. Is not the Doctor conſcious, alſo, that the infidel and the ſceptic would deny this? Is he not conſcious that they would diſpute the juſtneſs of the ſcales in which *he* weighs *inſuperables*, and takes the different degrees of their weight?

That the being and attributes of God are *incomprehenſible*, no one, it is preſumed, will deny. But, by no means doth it follow from thence that there are *inſuperable difficulties* attending the *belief* of his exiſtence and perfections. The ſame, alſo, may be ſaid reſpecting the ſcheme of chriſtianity, and the moral government of God. But, to ſuppoſe that our belief of the exiſtence of objects and things which we cannot *comprehend*, involves the ſame *inſuperable* difficulties as the *foreknowledge* of the exiſtence of *that* which is, nevertheleſs, *abſolutely uncertain and contingent*; pays but a poor compliment to divine revelation.

It is by no means apprehended that it was the Doctor's deſign to weaken the evidence of divine revelation in general, or, of the important doctrines of it. But,

* p. 97.

But, if the ſubjects of divine revelation, in the moſt important articles, be in fact attended with difficulties that are *inſuperable*—yea, as inſuperable and unſurmountable as are contained in the hypotheſis that it can be *foreknown* that events will take place where it is utterly *uncertain* whether they will ever exiſt, or not; How can we expect that the belief of divine revelation will ever become very general; much more, that it will ever have an univerſal ſpread in our world?

But further; ſome of the Doctor's obſervations reſpecting the divine preſcience, made with much juſtice, if we miſtake not are perfectly inconſiſtent with all the ideas he expreſſeth of human liberty. He ſays, "To him who calleth things that are not as though "they were, and with whom a thouſand years are as "one day, the knowledge of futurity is *preſent know-* "*ledge.*"* It may reaſonably be concluded that the Doctor's idea is, that thoſe objects and events which are *future* to us, whoſe knowledge and perceptions are *ſucceſſive*, have *preſent exiſtence* in the divine mind, or view: otherwiſe God's knowledge of futurity would not differ from the knowledge which, in ſome caſes, *we* obtain. For, he juſtly obſerves, that "In an in- "finite underſtanding there is no before or after—no "ſucceſſion of ideas." Yet, if the objects of the divine foreknowledge have not the ſame preſent exiſtence in the mind of God as they ever will, or can, have; the divine ideas muſt of neceſſity be ſucceſſive. Theſe, perhaps, are alſo the ideas of Mr. Abernethy, when he ſaith, "The futurity of contingent events is "real—a free action now done, was yeſterday, or in "any preceding point of duration, as truly future, as "it has to day actually come to paſs."§

If the free actions of men have always had preſent exiſtence in the divine mind—if, before they took place, they had real futurity, In what ſenſe is it that they are *contingent?* There could be no contingency

* p. 97. § p. 104.

with reſpect to them, inconſiſtent with their having *real futurity* before they took place; or, inconſiſtent with their having *preſent exiſtence* in the divine mind: therefore, no *contingency* inconſiſtent with a moſt *abſolute and infallible antecedent certainty* of their future exiſtence. And, if there be ſuch an antecedent certainty of exiſtence of the free actions of men, they cannot be free *in the Doctor's ſenſe of freedom*; but, muſt of neceſſity come into exiſtence in connexion with ſome antecedent cauſe. With much juſtice, therefore, doth the Doctor obſerve, that the "attempt" to reconcile the divine preſcience with liberty in the creature, "hath been executed in ſuch a manner as hath rather evidenced the folly and arrogance of the undertakers, than cleared the ſubject."*

Such difficulties as theſe would, with many, diſcourage every attempt to vindicate a ſcheme of liberty ſo manifeſtly clogged and incumbered with them. But, no objections againſt the myſterious power in men of cauſing their own acts of will, ſeem to be of any weight with Gentlemen who have once adopted the idea of the exiſtence of ſuch a power, and endeavoured to ſupport and defend it. Every objection, and every argument, againſt the exiſtence of ſuch a power, fail; or, are abſorbed and perfectly ſwallowed up in the *vortex* of ſelf-determination.

But, how the Doctor diſcovers that "Preſcience is "a difficulty that incumbers Mr. Edwards's ſcheme "no leſs than that of his opponents," is rather difficult to comprehend. In order that this may appear, however, he quotes Mr. Edwards as ſaying that "there muſt be a certainty in things themſelves, be"fore they are certainly foreknown;" and, affirming the *former* to be the "foundation" of the *latter*. Mr. Edwards explains himſelf to mean, *not* the certainty of the *knowledge* there may be of the future exiſtence of things foreknown; but the certainty there is *in reality* of their future exiſtence, aſide from the *knowledge*

* p. 96.

knowledge of this certainty. His words are, "Meta-
"physical or philosophical necessity are nothing differ-
"ent from their *certainty*. I speak not now of the
"certainty of *knowledge*, but the certainty there is in
"things themselves." On this the Doctor observes,
"If by this certainty in things themselves be meant
"the same as the divine decrees and determinations,
"then these being the supposed foundation of fore-
"knowledge, the latter cannot be the *cause* of events,
"as Mr. Edwards represents."* Where Mr. Edwards represents foreknowledge to be the *cause* of events, the Doctor has not told us. He abundantly represents *foreknowledge* as a *proof* of the certainty that the objects of it will exist: but, no where, as we have observed, as *causing* that certainty. And, how *Prescience*, according to this representation of the nature of it, is a difficulty which incumbers Mr. Edwards's scheme of necessity, or certainty, no less than that of his opponents, is hard to be discovered. That the existence of things should be previously *foreknown*, can, certainly, be no objection against that scheme of necessity which Mr. Edwards defends.

The Doctor proceeds in stating the difficulties which arise from Prescience *on Mr. Edwards's scheme*; and says, "If the purposes and decrees of God, or his
"determinations as to futurity, be antecedent to fore-
"knowledge, and the foundation thereof, then his
"will is determined at random, by blind contingence,
"without design and foresight—guided by no wisdom,
"no motive, no intelligent dictate whatever—he only
"acts by an *Hobbistical* fatality." But, is it a dictate of the common reason of men, that if God foresee that *certain events* shall take place in distinction from *others*, *because he has determined that they shall*, therefore his determinations were "guided by no wisdom," but were "without counsel and wisdom!" When a man contemplates building a mansion-house, Doth the *foresight* he hath of its dimensions and form, *which*

* p. 100.

aroſe from his *determination* to build of ſuch a particular form and ſuch dimenſions, prove that his will, in that caſe, was determined "at random—guided by no wiſdom, no motive?" When the Doctor determined to make and publiſh remarks on Mr. Edwards's Inquiry, &c. as *a conſequence of this determination* he *foreſaw* that his "Examination" would contain certain particular arguments and objections. Doth it from thence follow that, in the choice of his arguments and objections, his will was determined *at random—guided by no wiſdom?*

The divine knowledge comprehends and embraces every poſſible object and event. And, becauſe the divine mind foreſaw that *certain particular events* would take place, *becauſe he determined that they ſhould*, Doth it from thence follow that his mind was "guided by no wiſdom" in this determination? The reader, perhaps, may judge that it was "through want of reflection and reſearch—through inattention" to the reaſonings of Mr. Edwards, that the Doctor has made ſuch an objection.

Here, then, we have the arguments by which the Doctor proves that "Preſcience is a difficulty which "incumbers Mr. Edwards's own ſcheme no leſs than "that of his opponents." The *firſt* is, that Mr. Edwards's ſcheme doth not admit foreknowledge to be the *cauſe* of events, or of their *certainty*: the *ſecond*, that it implies that the determinations of the divine mind that certain particular events in diſtinction from others ſhould take place, were without motive or wiſdom. Whether there be any weight in theſe objections—any juſtice in the Doctor's concluſions—the candid and impartial public will judge. The ſame impartial public may, poſſibly, judge that a candid conſtruction of Mr. Edwards's argument would not have permitted the Doctor to repreſent him as maintaining that the *divine will is determined prior to KNOWLEDGE*. People in general will ſee no difficulty in ſuppoſing that the determinations of the divine

vine mind respecting the existence of events, are formed in *infinite wisdom*; and, at the same time, that the Deity *knows* that *certain events* shall take place *because he has determined that they shall*. Should it be considered by the public that the Doctor maintains the divine *foreknowledge* of the existence of events to be antecedent to God's *decrees* that they shall exist; mankind will be liable to suppose that *his doctrine*, not Mr. Edwards's, subjects the Deity to "an *Hobbistical* fatality." For, if events have fixed certain futurity antecedent to the determinations of the divine mind concerning them, it is easy to see there is a cause somewhere operating superior to the divine will.

3. To admit a power of self-determination in men, is inconsistent with the supposition that *holy affections* are the effect of the *immediate influence of the Spirit of God* on the heart. It is as inconsistent with the existence of this supposed power, to admit the Deity to be the cause of *holy*, as of *unholy* affections. If the *moral capacity* with which God hath endowed us be *the proper cause of volition*, it is as much the proper cause of those which are *holy*, as of those which are *unholy*; and, men *determine themselves* as much to *holiness* as to *sin*. This the Doctor's argument really admits. For, he saith, "Were there not *a proper cause in the* "*mind*, the exercises and actions of mankind would "uniformly be such as the order of our nature points "out. And, the supposition of the *fall* of angels or "men would be as wild, as the supposition of the "everlasting mountains moving out of their place, or "the interruption of the harmony of the spheres. At "least it would be viewed in *no other light than any* "*alteration in the natural world, or suspension of the* "*laws of nature*. The latter might as well be judged "criminal and morally evil, as the former. If the "*cause* of the actions and exercises of moral agents be "not *in themselves*, then the Deity is the proper, *effi-*"*cient cause* of them."* This implies the motions of the

* p. 21, 22.

the human will, if cauſed by divine efficiency, to be as perfectly *mechanical* as thoſe of the heavenly bodies; and, that neither virtue nor vice are any more properly predicable of them—that exerciſes of *love* are no more of the nature of virtue, than the *harmony* of the ſpheres; nor, of *hatred* of the nature of vice, than tempeſts and ſtorms. And, this muſt evidently be the truth, if it be eſſential to *moral* action that the "mind "of the agent be the true cauſe of his own election "and actions." If no actions, or elections, are morally free but thoſe which are *cauſed* by the agents themſelves—if the moral capacity in men be the proper cauſe of *volition*; it is as abſurd to ſpeak of *virtue*, or *holineſs*, as an effect of *divine efficiency*, as, *vice* and *moral evil*. It is as eſſential to the *virtuouſneſs* of human actions that men be the proper cauſes of them, as to their *viciouſneſs*. An act of the will which is cauſed by divine efficiency, can no more partake of the nature of *holineſs*, than it can, of *ſin*. And this is acknowledged by ſome of the advocates for a power of ſelf-determination; particularly, a late noted writer on univerſal ſalvation.* He manifeſtly ſuppoſeth it to be inconſiſtent with the liberty of the creature, and the morality of his actions, for divine immediate efficiency to be exerted for the production of *any* exerciſes of will of any kind whatever. And, in this, he was perfectly conſiſtent with himſelf. By the paſſage juſt quoted from the "Examination, &c. continued," we may conclude the Author entertained the ſame view of the ſubject: nor could he, indeed, in any conſiſtency with himſelf, admit *holy*, any more than *ſinful*, affection, to be the fruit of *divine efficiency*. How, then, are we to underſtand the Doctor, when he ſpeaks of "the *ſtrivings of the divine ſpirit*;§ the efficaciouſ-"neſs of means *through the divine concurrence* with "them;‖ the *Spirit of God* given with the goſpel;¶ the "means and *influences* of grace," &c.?** Can it be that

* Dr. Chauncey. § Examination, p. 111. ‖ p. 112. ¶ Examination continued, p. 25. ** Examination, p. 107.

that he meant to be underſtood of any *immediate influences of the Spirit of God* upon the minds of men, producing holy affections? Or, did he uſe theſe expreſſions as *phraſes of courſe*, in conformity to *cuſtom* and *prevailing notions* of chriſtians? If the Doctor deſigned to intimate any *immediate agency of the Spirit of God* in the production of holy affections, it was in perfect inconſiſtency with his whole ſcheme reſpecting moral liberty. But, if *this idea* of divine influences be excluded, as it muſt be if *men are the cauſes of their own acts of will*, What are we to make of thoſe paſſages of Scripture which ſpeak of *believers* as being "born, not of blood, nor of the *will of the fleſh*, nor "of the *will of man*, but of God"*—as being *born of the ſpirit*§—of all true virtue and holineſs, as being *fruits of the ſpirit*, &c.?‖ What can be more unmeaning and unintelligible than ſuch paſſages and expreſſions as theſe, if the *proper cauſe of human exerciſes and actions be IN THE MIND?* And, "*on any other* "*hypotheſis*, the ſuppoſition of the *fall* of angels or "men would be as wild, as that, of the everlaſting "mountains moving out of their place, or the inter-"ruption of the harmony of the ſpheres."

Here, then, the reader hath a view of ſome of the natural and inevitable conſequences of the Doctor's ſentiments reſpecting human liberty and the powers of men. They are utterly ſubverſive of the doctrines of the *divine decrees* and *particular election*. Yea, ſo full and open is the Doctor in rejecting theſe doctrines, that on the hypotheſis of its being *determined* beforehand that *any* of the unregenerate ſhall not uſe the means of grace, or ſhall not ſucceed, he challengeth *any man* to ſhew how the goſpel can be a privilege to them, or they liable to a greater damnation for abuſing it.¶

And, as to the natural conſequences of his ſcheme of human liberty, as it reſpects the *foreknowledge* of God, the Doctor ſuppoſeth the *wiſeſt of men* to view it as

* John, i. 13. § John, iii. 6. ‖ Galat. v. 22, 23. ¶ Examination, p. 115.

as incapable of being reconciled with the prescience of God by *any human understanding*.*

Whether, what the Doctor hath advanced be not equally irreconcilable with the scripture-representations of the immediate influences of the Spirit of God, on the hearts of men, in the production of *holy affections*, the candid and intelligent reader will now judge.

These are difficulties which greatly embarrass the Doctor's scheme of sentiment; nor, can he justly expect that it will universally prevail, until he remove them out of the way.

But, lest we exceed the proper limits of an Appendix, it is time to proceed to observations on some other parts of the Doctor's "Examination of Mr. Edwards continued." His leading objection to Mr. Edwards's scheme is, that it implies the *Decree* or *Will* of God to be the proper, original cause of the existence of moral evil. This, the Doctor thinks he has abundantly proved: and, this being proved, he supposes it sufficient to subvert Mr. Edwards's whole scheme; because, as he expresseth it, "it destroys the divine "moral character, and renders it impossible that the "creature should be a moral agent. "It is," he says, "to ascribe the sin of man to God in such a sense as "we cannot attribute it to the devil, without bringing "a railing accusation against him."§ That Mr. Edwards's scheme respecting the origin of evil destroys the divine moral character, the Doctor infers from this consideration, if we understand him, that it implies evil in the divine mind itself. He supposeth that the *cause* must necessarily partake of the *nature* of its effect. He saith, "Whether, therefore, we suppose "that sin arose from the want or withdraw of divine "influence and assistance, or from divine agency and "efficiency, or that creatures were made wicked at "first, *the nature of sin cannot be separated from its* "*cause*.——That if one moral agent (whether "creature or creator) is supposed to be the positive

"cause

* Examination continued, p. 96. § — 66.

" cauſe of ſin in another, ſo much ſin as to be attri-
" buted to the efficiency of the former, is to be taken
" from the criminality of the latter, and ſet to the
" cauſe and producer of it."* The Doctor ſuppoſes that the " cauſe which produceth wickedneſs, is wicked ;" that a diſpoſition produced in creatures by a cauſe extrinſic of their own minds " cannot partake " of the nature of vice, viewed in relation to the *ſub-*
" *ject*, however it doth, viewed in relation to the *cauſe*
" and producer of it."§

That moral evil hath a cauſe, yea, an *efficient* one, is allowed by the Doctor. He ſays, " Now if they" (moral agents) " are not the *efficients* of their own " ſins, the Deity muſt be ; elſe ſin would have no " efficient cauſe at all—every ſin would be an effect " without a cauſe—to ſay which, we agree with Mr. " Edwards, would be abſurd."‖ On this we remark, that the exiſtence of ſin muſt be *neceſſary*, with all *that neceſſity* which Mr. Edwards urgeth, and to which the Doctor objecteth. To ſay that ſin is the effect of a cauſe, yea, an *efficient* one, is the ſame as to ſay that its exiſtence is *certainly and infallibly* connected with that cauſe. Nothing can, with propriety, be termed an *efficient cauſe* of an event, with which the exiſtence of the event is not indiſſolubly connected. *That* with which the exiſtence and taking place of ſin is not thus firmly and certainly connected, cannot be termed an *efficient* cauſe—unleſs a cauſe may be ſaid to be *efficient* which produceth *no effect*. We remark further,

That ſin may, yea neceſſarily muſt ariſe from the efficiency of a cauſe extrinſic of itſelf: and, conſequently, from the efficiency of a cauſe, or from *an efficiency*, which is not, *itſelf*, *ſin*. If ſin ariſe from a cauſe out of itſelf, it is abſurd to ſuppoſe the *cauſe* to be *ſin* or *ſinful*. *Cauſe* and *effect* are two diſtinct things. Sin is the *effect*, the *cauſe* of which is to be ſought. To ſay that the *cauſe* of ſin is *ſinful*, is only going back from *one effect* to *another* ; and,

* p. 79. § p. 75, 76. ‖ p. 65.

leaves us as much in the dark reſpecting the *cauſe* of ſin as we were before. No effect whatever can be ſuppoſed originally to ariſe from a *ſinful cauſe*, unleſs the firſt cauſe of all things be ſinful.

Sin, it is allowed, is an effect. Wherever, or in whatever, ſin be to be found, we find an *effect*. This is the effect, of which the *cauſe* is to be ſought. In the inquiry after the *cauſe* of ſin, nothing which is *ſinful* can be conſidered as ſuſtaining the relation of *cauſe*; or, with the leaſt propriety, have the epithet of *cauſe* given it. We might with as much propriety account for the exiſtence of *light*, by ſaying that it aroſe from the efficiency of a *luminous* cauſe, as for *ſin*, by ſaying it aroſe from a *ſinful cauſe*.

To ſay that ſin hath a cauſe, neceſſarily excludes the idea of ſin, or ſinfulneſs, from the cauſe. If the *cauſe* of ſin be *ſinful*, What was the *cauſe* of *its* ſinfulneſs, or of *the ſin which is in that cauſe?* It is "abſurd" to ſay it hath no cauſe. Conſequently, *this ſinfulneſs*, alſo, hath a cauſe, even an *efficient one*. And, upon the Doctor's principles, the cauſe which produceth *this wickedneſs*, is, alſo, *itſelf wicked*. In this way of accounting for ſin, either no cauſe at all is brought into view; or, cauſe and effect are perfectly confounded with each other.

To ſuppoſe the *agent*, or his *moral capacity* or *power of ſelf-determination*, or whatever elſe can be imagined in the creature, to be the *cauſe* of his ſinfulneſs, will afford no relief. If the *agent* be the cauſe of his own ſin, he muſt be ſinful antecedently to *the ſin which he cauſeth* or *produceth*: for, "the cauſe which produceth wickedneſs is wicked." So, if our *moral capacity*, or a *power of ſelf-determination*, be, either of them, the *cauſe* or *producer* of the agent's ſin, this moral capacity, or ſelf-determining power, muſt, alſo, be ſinful. But, as the Doctor juſtly obſerves, "the "author of our beings is the proper cauſe of our "moral capacity."* On this plan, therefore, *the author*

* p. 22.

author of our beings muſt, alſo, be ſinful. The Doctor's argument ſtands thus: "The author of our beings is the proper cauſe of our moral capacity: this capacity is the proper cauſe of volition. The volition being ſuppoſed to be ſinful, the capacity which is the cauſe of it, muſt, alſo, be ſinful—for, "the cauſe which produceth wickedneſs, is wicked." But, God being the cauſe of our *capacity*, if *that* be wicked, What, on the Doctor's principles, ſhall be ſaid of the cauſe?

Further; the Doctor ſuppoſeth that moral agents are *themſelves* the *efficient cauſe* of their own *vicious volitions*. He ſays, "He (Mr. Edwards) denies that "moral agents are *themſelves* the efficient cauſe of "their own vicious volitions; as it is certain that this "would imply a power of ſelf-determination in them: "now if they are not the efficients of their own ſins, "the Deity muſt be; elſe ſin would have no efficient "cauſe at all—every ſin would be an effect without a "cauſe—to ſay which, we agree with Mr. Edwards, "would be abſurd."* But, if there be a diſtinction betwixt *cauſe* and *effect*—if they be not perfectly the ſame, the one neither preceding nor following the other; *moral agents* muſt be ſinful antecedently to thoſe vicious volitions of which they are, themſelves, the efficient cauſe. And, if moral agents are ſinful antecedently to their effecting in themſelves *vicious volitions*, the *efficient cauſe* of *moral agents* muſt, alſo, be ſinful: for, *the cauſe which produceth wickedneſs, is wicked*. Do not the Doctor's reaſonings as certainly make the Deity the efficient cauſe of ſin as Mr. Edwards's? The Doctor alloweth that ſin hath a cauſe: but, then urgeth that the *cauſe* of it is, alſo, ſinful. Where will he ſtop ſhort of the *firſt cauſe*? Why then, in treating on moral ſubjects, virtue and vice, is it not as neceſſary on the Doctor's principles, as on Mr. Edwards's, to "detach their cauſe from their nature?"§ Had the Doctor carefully conſidered the

* p. 65. § p. 75.

conſequences of his own conceſſions and reaſonings, many of the obſervations he makes on the "futility" of Mr. Edwards's diſtinction betwixt the *nature* and *cauſe* of volition, in his fifth ſection, would have been found unneceſſary. If ſin hath a cauſe, and cauſe and effect be diſtinct from each other; our inquiries will neceſſarily lead us back to the firſt and original cauſe. And, if the *cauſe* of ſin be *ſinful*, there ſurely can be no ſtop till we get back to the *firſt cauſe of all things*. "And, on this ſuppoſition, the moral perfections and "government of God, and revealed religion, muſt be "diſbelieved."*

No ſentiment can be more abſurd in itſelf, or more ſubverſive of all principles of morality, than that which implies the *cauſe* of ſin to be, itſelf, *ſinful*. Wherever *ſinfulneſs* is to be found, or of whatever *it* be predicable, there is an effect. If ſin be admitted to be *an effect*, as it is by the Doctor, we are neceſſitated to look for ſomething as its cauſe *which is not ſin* or *ſinful*: otherwiſe, we loſe the diſtinction betwixt cauſe and effect. To ſay that ſinfulneſs is the cauſe of ſinfulneſs, is no more than ſaying that a thing is the cauſe of itſelf. If *ſin* hath a cauſe, it muſt neceſſarily be a cauſe that is *ſinleſs*. If *ſelf-determination* be *its* cauſe, it muſt neceſſarily be a *ſinleſs* or *holy ſelf-determination*. But, that a *ſinleſs*, *holy ſelf-determination*, or a *ſinleſs*, *holy capacity*, ſhould be the cauſe of a *vicious act of will*, is a ſuppoſition perfectly inconſiſtent with the idea that the *cauſe* of wickedneſs is *wicked*.

To ſay that the *cauſe* of moral evil, is, itſelf, alſo *morally evil*, is only ſaying that *one ſin is the cauſe of another*. In our inquiries, therefore, into the *origin* of moral evil, we are neceſſarily carried back to a cauſe which is *not morally evil*. If moral evil hath a *cauſe* of its exiſtence, if it hath *beginning* of exiſtence, it is in itſelf abſurd to ſuppoſe the *cauſe* of its exiſtence to be any otherwiſe than *holy* and *ſinleſs*: for, whenever we ſpeak of *any thing* as ſinful, we only ſpeak of

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* p. 60.

an effect. The *cauſe* of this effect, therefore, in order that it may be *an effect*—yea, *the very effect* the *cauſe* of which we are ſeeking, muſt neceſſarily be conſidered as *ſinleſs* and *holy*.

In order to maintain that it is inconſiſtent with the moral character of God for Him to *cauſe* the exiſtence of moral evil, the Doctor muſt prove that "volition ſprings from itſelf,"* and deny that ſin hath any cauſe out of itſelf; which is the ſame as to deny that it *hath a cauſe*. For, if it hath a cauſe out of itſelf, *this cauſe is not ſinful*—otherwiſe, cauſe and effect are the ſame, utterly undiſtinguiſhable from each other.

OBJ. "If it muſt of neceſſity be that the *cauſe of ſin* "is *ſinleſs*, or *holy*, Why will it not follow that the "*cauſe of virtue* muſt be *vicious*—of *holineſs*, *ſinful?* "If *ſin* in the creature require a cauſe of a different "nature from *itſelf*, *the effect*; Why may it not be "argued with equal juſtice that *holineſs* in the crea-"ture, alſo, requires a *cauſe* of an oppoſite and differ-"ent nature? And, if this be but the natural conſe-"quence of the preceding reaſonings reſpecting *ſin* "*and its cauſe*, it is ſufficient to ſhow that they are "fallacious."

ANS. Were it true that the exiſtence of moral virtue, or holineſs, in the intelligent ſyſtem, had *a beginning*, the objection would be of weight. But, were this true, it would imply that *that* Being whoſe exiſtence is *without beginning*, is deſtitute of holineſs; and is therefore ſinful. If the exiſtence of holineſs, in the moral ſyſtem, hath a *beginning*, it can be only in *creatures*; and, therefore, its exiſtence muſt have been originated, if it *hath a cauſe*, by a being deſtitute of holineſs: for, the being whoſe exiſtence is *without beginning*, who is from everlaſting, on this hypotheſis muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed to be unholy. But this is infinitely far from being the truth. The exiſtence of holineſs, in the moral ſyſtem, is coeval with that of the Deity—yea, its exiſtence is as *neceſſary* as that of God:

* p. 42.

God: it is essential to the Deity; being the very divine nature itself, without which no such being as God could possibly exist. And, it is easy to see that a holy God may *produce holy existence*, and give *beginning to creature-holiness*. Here we discern no difficulty—no appearance of absurdity or inconsistency. So, could it be admitted that the Being who is from eternity is sinful, it might easily be supposed that he might produce sinful existence in creatures: and, in that case, it might be said that the *cause of sin* in creatures is *sinful*—"the cause which produceth wickedness, is wicked." But, as this is infinitely far from being the truth, there can be nothing more reproachful to the Deity, in its natural and necessary consequences, than the position that *the cause of the existence of sin, is sinful*—"*the cause which produceth wickedness, is wicked.*" If *wickedness* hath *both cause* and *beginning*, the consequence is undeniable that *its cause is not wicked*; but, that its existence was originated by a *cause which is not sinful, but holy*.

Sin is moral being, or existence. It is not merely such an attribute of the moral existence where it is found, as that it can be abstracted from it, and yet *that* existence remain. Hence it is that holiness, in men, is spoken of, in the scriptures, as the object of a *new creation*. Sin is moral affection, an exercise of the will. This moral affection, or exercise of will, requires a *cause* of its existence, and *that*, too, out of itself, as much as any other moral existence. But, to suppose *its cause to be sinful* will necessarily lead to the absurdity of supposing the *first cause of all things* to be sinful.

The Doctor's objection to the supposition that the *decree* or *will* of God was properly the originating cause of the existence of moral evil, is, that this would imply moral evil in God. This the Doctor *asserts*: but the assertion needs the support of evidence, which the Doctor has not brought. What he saith on the subject consists rather in addresses to the imagination,

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than reaſonings. He labours to paint the doctrine in frightful colours, that men may be deterred from embracing it. It ſeems as though he felt the want of diſcernment to diſcover the ſophiſtry of thoſe arguments which are urged in ſupport of the obnoxious tenet. Hence his quarrel with *metaphyſics*, to diſgrace *which*, he has written a whole ſection; not the leaſt remarkable part of which is, that St. Paul "*diſclaims* meta-"phyſics—not ſurely as being above his abilities; but, "as of no uſe on the moſt eſſential point of religion—"rather injurious than helpful."* Had not the Doctor's argument againſt metaphyſical reaſoning been in diſtreſs, it never would have ſought aid from ſuch a quarter as this.

It is common for gentlemen who eſpouſe and endeavour to defend the doctrine of a power of ſelf-determination in men, to raiſe an outcry againſt metaphyſical reaſoning. It ſeems as though they had felt the diſadvantage of it to their cauſe. The uſe of *ſophiſtical argumentation* no one will attempt to defend. But, are not the gentlemen whoſe ſagacity enables them to diſcover a power of *ſelf-motion* in the human mind, able to detect the fallacy of thoſe reaſonings which are ſo unfriendly to their darling opinion? Is there no one able to take off the *thin veil* which covers the ſophiſtry of thoſe reaſonings by which the exiſtence of ſuch a power is ſaid to be impoſſible? Should this be done, it would be much more convictive and ſatisfactory to the public, than the moſt vehement exclamations againſt metaphyſics. Should this be done, the controverſy on this *diſguſtful* ſubject would be, at once, ſettled—at leaſt until ſome metaphyſical genius ſhall ariſe to diſcover objections hitherto unthought of againſt the exiſtence of this myſterious power. This would give the world of mankind to ſee that the noble ſentiments concerning liberty, ſo congenial to every generous feeling of the human mind, ſtand indeed on a firm baſis, and are capable

* p. 128.

capable of ſolid and rational ſupport. But, until this be done, the Doctor's ſentiments reſpecting human liberty, will appear, at leaſt to many, problematical; and ſome may poſſibly ſuſpect that his exclamations againſt metaphyſics betray his want of argument.

But, when the ſubject is calmly and diſpaſſionately conſidered, What is there in the opinion, that the *will* or *decree* of God originated the exiſtence of moral evil, ſo abhorrent from the dictates of reaſon and the common apprehenſions of men? It is, certainly, not repugnant to the general apprehenſions of mankind to ſuppoſe that nothing takes place, in the ſyſtem, *contrary* to what God deſigned; or, which he deſigned and determined ſhould never take place. To imagine that moral evil hath broken in upon the ſyſtem, when God had determined that it ſhould not, is an opinion which would ſhock the greater part of men. It would naturally excite diſtruſt in God; and, beget ideas hardly reconcileable with that character which the holy One of Iſrael aſſumes when he declares, *My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.*

How God *cauſeth* events to come into exiſtence, is not for us to comprehend. All that we know about the matter, is that God *willeth*, for reaſons in his own infinite mind, that they ſhould exiſt, and *they do exiſt*. That human actions ſhould come into exiſtence in common with this divine will as their cauſe, no more prevents their freedom, than their coming into exiſtence in connexion with any thing elſe as their cauſe. The *action* of the human mind, it is allowed by the Doctor, hath a cauſe. And, unleſs the mind be conſcious of ſomething beſides its own action, it muſt of neceſſity be unconſcious of the *cauſe* of this action, be this cauſe what it may. We know, indeed, that the human mind, over and above the conſciouſneſs it hath of its own *voluntary* exerciſes, is percipient in *ſpeculative ideas*. But *theſe*, it is not urged by the Doctor, are the cauſes of volitions. The moral part of man, that which is the only object of praiſe, or cenſure, is

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actually percipient only in exercise. To suppose it percipient when not in exercise, would be inconsistent with supposing it, either praise-worthy or blamable, *in those perceptions*; as this would imply *virtue* and *vice* to be involuntary—that we may be virtuous and vicious without any act of will. Were there, therefore, or could there be, any *such perceptions*, the mind would be as perfectly passive in them, as in its *speculative ideas*. No more, therefore, may any such perceptions, on the Doctor's plan, be allowed to be the *cause* of acts of will, than *mere speculations*. Hence it must appear absurd to suppose that men are *conscious* of the *causes*, or of the *operation* of the cause, of their own voluntary action. Be this cause what it may, or where it may, it matters not: be it, either this, or that, men are equally unconscious of its operation. And, if there be a *cause* of the exercises of the human will, this cause cannot be subject to the controul of volition, unless *causes* are under the controul of their *effects*. And, if it be not subject to the controul of *volition*, it is not subject to the controul of the *will*—unless the *will* controul it, and controul its own exercises too; and *that* without *willing*, that is *involuntarily*.

But, if human volitions be connected with the operation of a cause *involuntary* as to those who are the subjects of them; their connexion with *one thing* as a cause, no more than with *another*, destroys their morality, or takes away their freedom. They are as perfectly free, and sustain as truly a moral nature, if they come into existence in connexion with the holy purpose of God as their cause, as if they came into being in connexion with any thing else that can be imagined as their cause.

The Doctor admits that sin consists in voluntary exercise, and, that sin hath a cause. He maintains, with Dr. Watts, "that an intelligent spirit is the cause of its own volitions."* If so, it must be the *involuntary*

* p. 42.

cauſe, or a cauſe in which the *will* is not exerciſed. So that, on his own conceſſions, it muſt be that the volitions of men come into exiſtence in connexion with a cauſe, of the operations of which they are not conſcious. And this, certainly, is agreeable to the dictates of common ſenſe.

Now, if virtue and vice are predicable of volitions which come into exiſtence in connexion with a cauſe extrinſic of themſelves, which the Doctor admits; and, in the exerciſes of theſe volitions the mind hath no conſciouſneſs of the operation of their cauſe; it muſt be perfectly immaterial to the virtuouſneſs or viciouſneſs of exerciſes of the will, what or where the cauſe is in connexion with which they come into exiſtence: and if, immaterial as to their virtuouſneſs or viciouſneſs, then equally ſo to their moral freedom.

It is hence manifeſt that, for human voluntary exerciſes to come into exiſtence in connexion with the *decree or will of God* as their cauſe, is in no meaſure inconſiſtent with their being, in a moral ſenſe, free; and, in no meaſure inconſiſtent with their being worthy of cenſure, or praiſe. This is as evident upon the principles and conceſſions of the Doctor as on any hypotheſis whatever.

And, to ſuppoſe that all human actions, of whatever nature or kind, be they either virtuous, or vicious, do in fact come into exiſtence in conſequence of the holy and wiſe purpoſe of God, and in connexion therewith, is perfectly agreeable to the repreſentations of the word of God. This is a ſentiment abundantly taught and inculcated in the holy ſcriptures. A great variety of paſſages might be adduced in proof of this: but, for the ſake of brevity, we will mention only two; thoſe are the paſſages which relate to the crucifixion of Chriſt, and, hardening of Pharaoh's heart. In the Doctor's ſection on texts of ſcripture miſconſtrued, he remarks on both of theſe. On the paſſages which ſpeak of the crucifixion of Chriſt as a fruit of God's determination, or of the determinate counſel of

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God, the Doctor obſerves, "Now theſe texts either "imply an *efficient* determination of the Deity in this "event, or they do not: if they do not, they are no-"thing to the purpoſe for which they are produced "by the advocates for neceſſity. On the other hand, "if it can be ſhown that they really imply a divine "efficiency on the minds of the murderers of our "Lord, influencing and neceſſitating them to this hor-"rid deed; then we ſhall not heſitate to admit that ev-"ery ſpecies and degree of wickedneſs proceeds from "the ſame efficiency."* Not to remark upon the improper application of the term *neceſſitating* in the paſſage now before us, we only obſerve upon the ſhort way the Doctor takes to evade the evidence from the holy ſcriptures of the inconſiſtency of his own ſentiments reſpecting human liberty. Inſtead of the *dull, round-about way of reaſoning and argumentation* to prove the ſenſe of theſe paſſages not to be what his oppoſers urge; he ſays, if it be ſo, "we ſhall not "heſitate to admit that every ſpecies and degree of "wickedneſs proceeds from the ſame efficiency." And, is this any *proof* that the *advocates for neceſſity*, as the Doctor terms them, miſconſtrue theſe texts? *They* urge them as a proof that the exiſtence of wickedneſs is the object of a divine decree; and, that it takes place as a certain conſequence of this decree, and in connexion with it. "No," ſaith the Doctor, "they cannot mean any ſuch thing; for, that would "imply that all wickedneſs whatever, which ever "takes place, was *decreed* by the Deity." Admit it: But, is this any argument that the holy ſcriptures do not aſſert it? The inquiry is, Whether the ſcriptures aſſert this doctrine? To *ſay that they do not*, is not to *argue*; or, to produce the leaſt kind of evidence that they do not moſt certainly imply the doctrine ſo ſtrenuouſly oppoſed. Nor, is it giving any reaſon at all why they ſhould be conſidered as miſapplied or perverted by the Doctor's oppoſers. According to ſuch

* p. 107.

a mode of reaſoning upon the ſcriptures, every one will ſee that it is forever impoſſible to determine any controverſy by their authority. This is not to conform our ſentiments on moral ſubjects to the holy ſcriptures, but, to bend theſe ſacred oracles, by the weight of our own aſſertions, to our own preconceived opinions. On ſuch a ground it is that the Doctor "*ventures*" to take it as "a firſt principle" that God is not the cauſe of ſin; and, that mankind have an *immediate conſcioulneſs* of *liberty*,* meaning undoubtedly a power of ſelf-determination. And, conſidering it as dangerous to bring theſe ſentiments to the teſt of metaphyſical diſcuſſion, he takes the ſhorter way of conſtituting them *firſt principles*; and, *then* no one ought to diſpute them.

But, poſſibly it may be thought injurious to the Doctor to repreſent him as taking *ſo ſummary a way* to anſwer the argument from thoſe paſſages of ſcripture which relate to the crucifixion of Chriſt; ſince he has endeavoured to ſhow that they may be taken in a different ſenſe from that in which they are underſtood by his oppoſers. The Doctor ſays there is a twofold ſenſe in which events may be ſaid to come to paſs by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, without implying any active concurrence or efficiency of his power.§ The firſt is, when events come to paſs agreeably to the *predictions of his word*. But, was it not incumbent on the Doctor, in order to ſupport his own conſtruction of theſe paſſages, to ſhow that God *predicts* certain events, and yet exerts no power, in order to bring them into exiſtence? Are *divine predictions* of events to be conſidered as mere fortune-telling? Can they juſtly be conſidered in any other light than *declarations of what God deſigns and wills ſhall come to paſs?* It is unſuppoſable that the *will* of the Deity ſhould be *indifferent* with reſpect to the exiſtence of thoſe events which he lets his creatures know ſhall certainly come to paſs: and, abſurd to

* p. 127. § p. 107.

to imagine that his will oppoſeth their coming into exiſtence. Divine predictions of future events muſt, therefore, be viewed as declarations that God *wills and deſigns* that thoſe events ſhall come to paſs. And, it is *God's will and deſign* thus revealed, that gives certainty to the future exiſtence of the events which they reſpect. And, in connexion with this divine will thus revealed it is that the events do, in fact, take place. And, if this be ſo, let the candid reader judge whether *any event* which GOD predicts, can be ſuppoſed to take place "without implying any active concurrence of divine power." But, further, the Doctor urgeth that "ſuch events as God determines not to prevent "by the interpoſal of his power, may alſo be ſaid to "come to paſs in the ſame way." But, is God's *not preventing*, and in this ſenſe *permitting*, any cauſe at all of the events thus *permitted?* Let it be remembered that the Doctor himſelf ſuppoſeth it to be abſurd, as has been before obſerved, to imagine that *ſin has no efficient cauſe*. According to him, therefore, *that wickedneſs which God doth not, by his power, prevent men from being the efficient cauſe of, themſelves, may be ſaid to come to paſs by the determinate counſel, foreknowledge and ordination of God.* But, will not every reader, at once, ſee that this conſtruction holds for granted a power of ſelf-determination in men; and, that men are the efficients of their own acts of will? When it is *proved* that men poſſeſs ſuch a power, we may allow that thoſe paſſages of ſcripture which foretel the crucifixion of Chriſt, and repreſent this event as a fruit of the determinate counſel of God, may intend no more than that God determined not to interpoſe, by his power, to ſave his Son from crucifixion. But, until this *is proved*, we ſhall not heſitate to conclude that the Doctor has ſaid nothing to take off the force of the argument of his oppoſers drawn from the paſſages under conſideration. So, that all he has ſaid really amounts to no more than this, viz. that they *do not*, *cannot*, imply any efficient

divine

divine determination with reſpect to the taking place of this event.

As to thoſe paſſages of ſcripture where God is ſpoken of as hardening Pharaoh's heart, the Doctor gets over them in a manner equally conciſe and eaſy. He ſays, "Now that God did not, could not, thus harden Pharaoh," (that is, in the manner urged by his oppoſers) "is manifeſt from the cleareſt notices we "have of the divine moral perfections."* *The clear notices the Doctor hath* of the divine moral perfections are the proof that *God did not harden* Pharaoh's heart, in ſuch a manner as the oppoſers of *his* ideas of liberty urge theſe paſſages as a proof that *he did*. The clear notices, however, which the Apoſtle Paul had of the divine moral perfections, ſeemed to be ſomewhat different. For, alluding to the Moſaic hiſtory of God's treatment of Pharaoh, in hardening his heart, he makes this concluſion, "Therefore hath he mercy "on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will "he hardeneth."§ The Apoſtle here makes uſe of an *active verb*, *he hardeneth*; and, an active verb uſed in a manner as truly implying agency and efficiency as words can well expreſs. When ſuch paſſages as theſe, with a great variety of others of the ſame tenour which might be mentioned, were it neceſſary, are urged as a proof that the will, or decree, of God really originated the exiſtence of moral evil, Is it a ſufficient anſwer to ſay, *that God did not, could not, thus do it, is evident from the cleareſt notices we have of the divine moral perfections?* Is this a ſufficient authority for determining that theſe texts are miſconſtrued and miſapplied by thoſe who urge them as a proof that the Deity, for wiſe reaſons, really *willed* that moral evil ſhould exiſt? The public, certainly, have reaſon to expect ſome better proof that the ſentiments of Mr. Edwards have not the authority of the word of God for their ſupport.

But, why ſhould it be thought unreaſonable to ſuppoſe

* p. 112. § Rom. ix. 18.

poſe that the Deity ſhould ſo ordain that, for wiſe reaſons, moral evil ſhould exiſt in his ſyſtem? Can any one believe that there is the ſame oppoſition of will, in the divine mind, to the taking place of ſuch an event, as there is to the real nature of moral evil? No man, in his ſenſes, will admit this: the conſequences would be too repugnant to every idea of the *ſupremacy and almighty power* of God to be allowed. And, if the oppoſition of the divine will to the *nature of moral evil*, and *to its taking place in the ſyſtem*, are not *one and the ſame*; How can it be made to appear that his *willing* or *ordaining* that it ſhould take place, is inconſiſtent with his hating it with an infinite hatred? And, if it be conſiſtent with the infinite purity and holineſs of God, and his moſt perfect diſapprobation of moral evil, that He ſhould, nevertheleſs, for reaſons in his own eternal mind, ſee fit to decree and ordain that it ſhould exiſt; there will appear to be no inconſiſtency betwixt the *decrees* of God, and the *commands and prohibitions* of his word. The *moral law* is the rule and meaſure of *our conduct*—it points out what is fit *for us* to do, and what *in our characters* the Deity will view with approbation, or the reverſe. The *decrees of God* relate to *his own conduct*; and, are the rule and meaſure of it in *his ordination and diſpoſal of events*. It belongs to *God, and to him alone*, to ſay what events ſhall take place, and what, not. Nothing but obedience, and ſubmiſſion to his authority, belong to us. Nor, is it any more inconſiſtent with the divine purity and hatred of iniquity for him to *ordain*, than for him to *permit*, that it ſhould take place. He *could have prevented* its exiſtence, all agree: and, had he the ſame infinite averſion of will from *its taking place*, as he hath from *the nature of it*, he certainly would have done it.

Moral evil muſt, of neceſſity, have a cauſe of its exiſtence. This is admitted by the Doctor. And, as moral evil had *beginning* of exiſtence, it muſt of neceſſity have been originated by a cauſe which is *not morally*

morally evil, but *the reverſe*. To admit that moral evil had *beginning of exiſtence* in the ſyſtem—that it hath a *cauſe*—that it was *originated by any thing beſides itſelf*; and yet, to ſay that its *cauſe* was *morally evil*, is a perfect abſurdity. To ſay that it hath *no cauſe* of its exiſtence, is the ſame as to ſay that it *had no beginning*—therefore is *eternal*.

Whether moral evil be, itſelf, beſt for the world, is not a ſubject of debate amongſt divines of any denomination. The affirmative of this no one has ever attempted to defend. The Doctor might have omitted the ſection in which he endeavours to prove that *moral evil is not beſt for the world*. He would not, then, have had occaſion to aſſert that Mr. Edwards declares that it is. He ſaith, "Now were it admitted, that *moral* "*evil is for the beſt*, as Mr. Edwards declares *he is certain it is*."* Mr. Edwards's words are, as quoted by the Doctor, "I believe there is no perſon of good "underſtanding who will venture to ſay, he is certain "that it is impoſſible it ſhould be beſt,———that "there ſhould be ſuch a thing as moral evil in the "world."§ The intervening part of the ſentence, omitted by the Doctor, is, "taking in the whole compaſs "and extent of exiſtence, and all conſequences in the "endleſs ſeries of events." Had the Doctor any authority from this paſſage, or from the next immediately following, to aſſert that Mr. Edwards declares that he is certain *moral evil* is for the beſt? Would the Doctor think himſelf candidly treated, ſhould it be aſſerted that he had written a ſection to prove that *it is not beſt* there ſhould be any ſuch thing as moral evil in the ſyſtem? Yet this might be aſſerted with as much propriety as he tells his readers that *Mr. Edwards declares he is certain that moral evil* is for the beſt. If the Doctor would oppoſe the real ſentiments of Mr. Edwards, as he profeſſeth to do, it will lie upon him to prove that, *all things conſidered, it is not, on the whole, beſt that moral evil hath taken place*. And, when

* p. 85. § p. 83.

when he has done this, he will not only have ſubverted Mr. Edwards's argument, but, alſo, diſcovered great imperfection in the ſyſtem and government of God. The queſtion is not, whether *moral evil be for the beſt*, but whether *that divine diſpoſal and ordination, under which, and as a fruit of which, moral evil doth in fact take place, be for the beſt.* When it ſhall be not only aſſerted, but proved, by the Doctor, either, that moral evil doth not take place as a *certain fruit and conſequence* of a divine ordination and diſpoſal of things; or, that this divine ordination and diſpoſal of things was not moſt perfectly wiſe and beſt; then, and not till then, it will be neceſſary to attempt a further vindication of Mr. Edwards againſt the reaſonings and objections of the Doctor in the ſection before us.

That the exiſtence of moral evil could not, poſſibly, have been originated by the will of God, the Doctor ſeems to think abundantly evident from a paſſage in the epiſtle of *James*—at leaſt we might conclude ſo, from his frequent repetition of it. The paſſage is this, "Let no man ſay, when he is tempted, I am "tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with "evil, *neither tempteth he any man.*"* A careful attention to the paſſage may, perhaps, convince us that it is not ſo pertinent to the Doctor's purpoſe as he ſeems to imagine. We know that the word *tempt* is uſed in different ſenſes by the ſacred writers. Sometimes it means *making trial of*, as metals are tried by fire. At other times it means *inviting or ſoliciting to ſin*. This latter is the ſenſe in which it is evidently uſed in the paſſage before us. When ſatan tempts men to wickedneſs, he doth it by perverting the truth, and repreſenting objects under falſe colours, in order to allure. Thus as to the original temptation to our firſt parents; "Yea, hath God ſaid ye ſhall not eat of eve-"ry tree of the garden?——Ye ſhall *not* ſurely die. "*For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, "then your eyes ſhall be opened: and ye ſhall be as gods,*

* James i. 13.

"*knowing good and evil.*"* As it is infinitely far from the Deity to be capable of being impoſed on by falſehood and miſrepreſentation; it is equally far from him in ſuch ways to impoſe on his creatures. He knows their entire dependence on him: and, whatever faculties and powers they poſſeſs, He knows they are abſolutely dependent on him for knowledge, and for the inſtruction which is neceſſary to their walking in the way of duty and ſafety. God, accordingly, exhibits things in their true light, and under their proper colours. And, the exhibitions are made with ſuch clearneſs—there is ſuch a ſufficiency of external light and means of knowledge, that, were it not for the ſelfiſh biaſſes and prejudices of our hearts, we never need miſtake with reſpect to the way, either of duty, or ſafety. A great variety of objects are ſet before us; and, thoſe of different natures and qualities. We know that it is within the compaſs of divine power to cauſe them to appear to our underſtanding and judgment, however free from prepoſſeſſion and bias, in very different colours from thoſe in which, both in his word and by the tenour of his providence, he has taught us to view them. By ſuch means we might neceſſarily be led into danger and evil, *without any bad intention*. Were we neceſſarily ſubjected, by divine providence, though our intentions were altogether upright and honeſt, to make a wrong judgment with reſpect to our duty and intereſt, we might be expoſed to danger and evil without any fault of our own—We might be liable to walk in a way which God forbids, and ſtill not be worthy to be blamed. Then, indeed, there might be a pretext for ſaying, *when we are tempted, we are tempted of God*. But, the warnings which God now, in fact, gives us, are abundantly ſufficient to arm us againſt danger from every quarter, if we exerciſe proper care and candour in attending to them.

We are wholly dependent on God for the means of knowledge—

* Geneſ. iii. 1. 4, 5.

knowledge—for that intellectual light which is neceſſary to preſerve us from evil and danger. But, if that which ought to be avoided ſhould be made to appear eligible to our underſtanding and judgment; or, that which ought to be choſen, the reverſe; and *that*, when the heart, or will, was free from prepoſſeſſion and prejudice; we ſhould *neceſſarily* be betrayed into evil. Then we ſhould be led aſtray by the repreſentations of things made *from without us* to our underſtanding and judgment. And, in that caſe, it might be ſaid that we were tempted and betrayed by thoſe appearances of things which they neceſſarily wear, and which were not given them by our prejudice. But, ſuch is the goodneſs and faithfulneſs of God, that the means of knowledge we enjoy are every way equal to the duties he requires of us: ſo that, if we go aſtray, the fault muſt be our own. We never miſtake, with reſpect to duty, unleſs it be through our own inattention and prejudice. So that "every man is tempted when he is drawn away *of his own luſt, and enticed.*" When prejudice perverts the repreſentations made to us in the word and providences of God, then we call evil, good; and, good, evil—put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs. Therefore, whenever we are *tempted*, in the ſenſe in which the term is uſed in the paſſage under conſideration, it is by the *luſt of our own hearts*, and not by any thing in the *external ſtate of things* tending to betray an honeſt mind into error, or miſtake. This appears to be the ſenſe in which the Apoſtle is to be underſtood when he ſays, "God cannot be tempted with evil; neither *tempteth he any man.*" And, if this be the caſe, let the reader judge whether it at all favours the Doctor's hypotheſis. What is here ſaid only denies that the ſtate and diſpoſal of things in divine providence neceſſarily expoſe men to miſtake their duty; or, that things are calculated, by the wiſe Diſpoſer, to betray men into wrong ways. On the other hand, the Apoſtle teacheth us, that we never miſtake our duty, or intereſt, but through ſome wicked

bias or luſt of our own hearts. But, does ſuch an aſſertion as this determine any thing with reſpect to a power of ſelf-determination in men? Doth this certainly imply that the will of God is, in the ſame ſenſe, oppoſed to the taking place of moral evil, as it is to its nature? Or, that moral evil hath not come into exiſtence as a fruit of the wiſe and holy purpoſe of God? It implies that ſin conſiſteth in the exerciſe of luſt: and, that without ſome wicked bias of heart, we never ſhould miſtake our duty, or be betrayed into wrong ways. But, the Apoſtle is far from connecting this *luſt* with its *cauſe* in order to determine it to be *criminal*: and, from ſaying any thing which would lead us to ſuppoſe that he ever had a thought that "the cauſe of wickedneſs is wicked."

It is now left to the impartial public to judge what degree of ſupport the doctrine of a power of ſelf-determination in men hath received from Dr. Dana's publications; and, whether, after all that the Doctor hath ſaid, the ground that Mr. Edwards had taken appears untenable. To the ſame tribunal muſt it be appealed to determine on the juſtice of the remarks we have, now, made on the "Examination of Preſident Edwards's Inquiry continued."

It now only remains that a proper attention be paid to the Doctor's *Strictures on the Eſſay on Moral Agency, ſo called*, as he terms it. This Eſſay the Doctor affects to treat with contempt. The public will judge how far it merits it, with more impartiality than the Doctor. They who maintain a public controverſy are exceedingly prone mutually to accuſe each other of unfairneſs: and this, probably, not wholly without reaſon. Such are the prejudices of men, that it is with difficulty we give the arguments of an opponent their juſt weight. How far the Doctor may have been injured in this reſpect, the public opinion will decide, notwithſtanding any thing we may aſſert upon the ſubject. But, whether he can acquit himſelf of injuſtice in charging Mr. Weſt with denying *original righteouſneſs*,

neſs, as he doth in the beginning of his Strictures, we ſhall refer to himſelf. In ſupport of this aſſertion, he quotes page 55. of the Eſſay. There *habit* and *temper* are defined to mean a fixed connexion betwixt our *preſent exerciſes of will* and future exerciſes of the *ſame general nature*. Adam not being confirmed in innocency, there was no ſuch eſtabliſhed connexion betwixt his *firſt* and future *holy* exerciſes of mind. In this ſenſe it was ſaid that he had not a holy *temper*, or the *habit* of holineſs. But, leſt our ideas ſhould be miſtaken, it was immediately added, that the *firſt and original exerciſes* of our firſt parent were *holy—poſitively virtuous and good*.

How far the Doctor's remarks on the ſection on *power*, in the Eſſay, are juſt, we are content to leave to the deciſion of others. He conjectures that our uſe of the term *power*, and the application we make of it, are improper and without authority. Be this as it may, the principal queſtion ought to be, whether our reaſonings upon the ſubject are juſt. However, we imagined that the authority of Mr. Locke, and of Chamber's Dictionary, were ſufficient to juſtify our application of the term: and, theſe authorities we had. The Doctor ſuppoſeth that, in the Eſſay profeſſedly written on Moral Agency, "the ſubject *itſelf* has been kept wholly out of ſight."* The reader will judge whether the ground of this ſuppoſition be not, that *a power of ſelf-determination* is excluded. If *this* power be eſſential to moral agency, we freely allow that we have, in our definition, left men no power that is eſſential to it. Whether any thing we had ſaid in the ſection on power be inconſiſtent with the praiſe-worthineſs, or blame-worthineſs, of human actions, we leave to others to determine.

Upon a review of the ſection on *motives*, we do not find it liable to the objections the Doctor hath made againſt it. *Motives*, conſidered as external objects or things, may be perceived by the intellectual faculty, without

* p. 144.

without any tendency to engage the choice. But that which the mind *reliſheth* in an object, or apprehends as *agreeable and lovely*, cannot be perceived and *rejected*—the reliſh, or perception of agreeableneſs, being in fact all the choice which is made of it. The reaſons exhibited in the goſpel why men ought to forſake their ſins, may be clearly diſcerned by the intellectual powers; and, the will at the ſame time be entirely oppoſed to them. What the Doctor's idea is of the *tendency* the goſpel hath to produce a change in men, we do not pretend to determine. But, that the cleareſt exhibition of goſpel truth to the intellectual views of men, is, always, attended with a ſtrong and violent oppoſition of the will to it *until the heart be changed by the immediate power of God*, we ſuppoſe capable of proof, both from the holy ſcriptures, and from experience. If the Doctor infers from this ſentiment that "the goſpel is no tender to the unregenerate," it will lie upon him to ſupport his inference.

The Doctor ſuppoſeth injuſtice is done him in the remarks made in the "Eſſay" on what he had written, in his "Examination," on the ſubject of *means*, &c. particularly in page 114--116. He chargeth the author of the Eſſay with having diſmembered his ſentences, and thereby given an unjuſt repreſentation of his ſentiments. Upon a review of what we had written, we do not find that we had miſrepeſented the meaning of our author. We quite agree with him in what he ſays in the "Examination continued." "Poſſibly the Examiner did not expreſs his ſentiments clearly,"* upon this ſubject. Had we continued our quotation, which the Doctor has ſupplied, p. 152. we, ſtill, do not ſee that it would have given a different aſpect to his ſentiments. He had ſaid that it cannot be propoſed that men ſhould act "from the higheſt ſpiritual principles while unregenerate." By the *higheſt ſpiritual principles* we apprehended he meant *thoſe which are truly gracious*—which diſtinguiſh the *regenerate*

* p. 155.

regenerate from the *unregenerate*. If this were not his meaning, it were to be wiſhed he had, now, explained himſelf more fully. And, if this were really his true meaning, it will ſtand thus, *It cannot be propoſed to the unregenerate to act from truly ſpiritual and gracious principles*. Therefore all that can be propoſed to the unregenerate is, that they ſhould act from *thoſe principles* of "ingenuity, gratitude, hope, fear, joy, ſorrow, &c." of which they are now, in fact, poſſeſſed. Theſe, it is admitted, are not the *higheſt ſpiritual principles*. And, as there are no *higher* ſpiritual principles, in any man, than thoſe which diſtinguiſh the regenerate from the unregenerate; we had, we ſuppoſed, ſufficient reaſon to conſider the Examiner as denying that unregenerate men are "commanded, invited, exhorted" to act from truly gracious and ſpiritual principles. We have no wiſh to miſrepreſent the ſentiments of any one. Perhaps the reader will find the Doctor's own explanation to be ſatisfactory. It is this, viz. that it cannot be propoſed to unregenerate men to act from the higheſt ſpiritual principles *as a medium of regeneration*. He ſays, "Now to *propoſe* any thing as a *medium* of converſion, "which would imply that the thing itſelf hath *taken* "*place*, the Examiner ſuppoſed, and ſtill believes, to "be abſurd. But to *propoſe* to the unregenerate to "act from the higheſt ſpiritual principles *as a medium* "*of regeneration*, would be to ſuppoſe regeneracy had "already taken place."* Having given this explanation, he adds, "That it is the duty of the unregene-"rate to forſake their ſins—that they have no excuſe "for making any delay in turning to God—that they "are obliged to love him with all their heart—and, "conſequently, to act from *moral* and *ſpiritual* princi-"ples they are not poſſeſſed of, or endowed with, the "Examiner fully believes, nor hath he ever denied." After all, the ſubject remains embarraſſed: nor is it eaſy to ſee the conſiſtency of the ſeveral things which the

* p. 153, 154.

the Doctor hath now ſaid upon it. It ſeems, by many things he has ſaid, to be his opinion, that there are *appointed means* for ſinners to uſe *in order* to their regeneration. He ſays, in the Examination, "It is the "united voice of Calviniſtic Divines, that there is the "greateſt poſſible encouragement to the *endeavours of* "*unconverted men* in the uſe of the means of ſalva-"tion."* In his "Strictures" he ſays, "Perhaps "Mr. Weſt's *real ſentiment* is, that there is no *medi-*"*um* of regeneration."§ We ſuppoſe he means to ſuggeſt that Mr. Weſt's *real ſentiment* is, that there is nothing required to be done by the ſinner *in order* to his regeneration. The Doctor, we doubt not, would reprobate ſuch a ſentiment as this: and, therefore, would conſider the unregenerate as *commanded*, *invited*, &c. to act from the natural principles of hope, fear, &c. ſince, in order to regeneration, it cannot be required of them to act from truly ſpiritual and gracious principles.

But, if the *unregenerate* have no excuſe for making *any delay* in turning to God—if they are *obliged* to love him with all their heart—and conſequently to act from *moral* and *ſpiritual* principles they are not poſſeſſed of, What is there left for them to do *in order* to converſion or regeneration? If men are *obliged* to act from moral and *ſpiritual* principles they are not poſſeſſed of, they cannot be *obliged* to act from *natural* and *different* principles *in order* to obtain theſe *ſpiritual* ones. To ſay that the unregenerate are obliged to do, or act, any thing *in order* to regeneration, and as *a mean* of it; is the ſame as to ſay that they are not *immediately* bound to act from thoſe *ſpiritual principles* which diſtinguiſh the regenerate: and, conſequently, that they have *ſome excuſe* for making *delay* in turning to God. How could his readers avoid ſuppoſing this to be the real ſentiment of the Examiner, when they hear him aſſert that men are not "commanded to act from "principles they are not endowed with—that it can-"not

* p. 113. § p. 155.

" not be propoſed that they ſhould act from the high-
" eſt ſpiritual principles while unregenerate ; and *this*
" notwithſtanding the explanation given in the " Ex-
" amination continued ?" He had ſaid, " ſuch facul-
" ties, principles, powers and affections as they are
" poſſeſſed of—are the *only* principles they can be re-
" quired to *act from* and improve." Theſe powers and principles he *now* explains to mean *natural* ones—thoſe which the *unregenerate* poſſeſs ; therefore, not *ſpiritual*. If men can be " commanded, invited, ex-horted" to act from *no other* principles than theſe, even according to the Doctor's own explanation of the term *principles*, Will he at the ſame time deny that the unregenerate are deſtitute of any power to act from theſe principles, which the regenerate are en-dowed with for acting from the principles which *they* poſſeſs ?

The Doctor ſays, " If it was not with deſign, but
" wholly for want of underſtanding what the opinion
" and real ſentiment of the Examiner is, that Mr.
" Weſt hath *ſo groſſly miſrepreſented* him, he can eaſily
" forgive this wrong."* Whether we *have miſrepre-ſented* the opinion and real ſentiment of the Examiner, is left to the candid public to judge.

But, for further light reſpecting his ſentiments on the ſubject of means, the Doctor turns us to the firſt ſection of the " Examination continued." Here he tells us, that " By the goſpel God calleth upon all
" men every where to repent, and believe in his Son
" for reconciliation and ſalvation"—that He (God)
" alſo gives his ſpirit with his goſpel, of which *unre-*
" *generate men* receive a meaſure :" and immediately adds, that " to him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance."§ If unregenerate men receive a meaſure of the ſpirit, and have promiſes made to them of receiving *abundance* upon their aſking in the exerciſe of that ſpirit a meaſure of which they now have, What *power* can they now want in order to do

* p. 154. § p. 15.

every thing that is required of them, *which* the regenerate poſſeſs? The Doctor proceeds immediately to obſerve, "We do not aſcribe any ſelf-derived, inde-
"pendent power, either to *unregenerate* or *regenerate*
"men, but ſuch only as they have received from God,
"of which they are not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the propri-
"etors, but ſtewards." But, do you not, Sir, really aſcribe the ſame powers to both? Do you aſcribe any higher power to the *regenerate* than one whereby they may aſk, with a *promiſe* of receiving? And, do you not aſcribe the ſame to the *unregenerate?* After this no one will be ſurpriſed to hear the Doctor repreſent common and ſpecial grace as ſcarcely diſtinguiſhable. He tells us that "preparatory and regenerat-
"ing grace are the operation of the ſame ſpirit. The
"tranſition from one to the other is not eaſily diſ-
"cerned. 'Tis a nice thing to draw the line exactly
"between common and ſpecial grace, admitting a
"ſpecific difference."* Muſt it not, then, be a thing *equally nice* to diſtinguiſh between the *powers* of the regenerate and the unregenerate? In a caſe of ſuch *nicety* as this, if we had miſapprehended the Examiner in what he ſaid reſpecting the uſe of means, and the powers of men, we think we may ſtand excuſed.

But, the Doctor has not told us upon what authority he aſſerts the tranſition from *preparatory* to *regenerating grace* to be not eaſily diſcerned. Doth he ſuppoſe the tranſition from *rebellion* to *ſubmiſſion* to be ſo ſmall? Is the change in regeneration ſuch as to be ſcarcely diſcernible? Is it ſo nice a thing to draw the line of diſtinction between *enmity* and *friendſhip?* And, are not the unregenerate *univerſally* repreſented, in the holy ſcriptures, as enemies to God? It is true, indeed, that we have no other way to diſtinguiſh any divine operations, one from another, than by the *effects* produced by them. But, we attribute the ſame kind of diſtinction, in this regard, to the operations, as are found in the effects. Viewed in this light, the tranſition

* p. 53.

tranſition from *every thing that takes place in* the unregenerate ſinner, or with reſpect to him, to a ſtate of regeneracy, is great—yea, exceedingly great; he being brought out of *darkneſs* into *marvellous light*—old things being done away in him, and *all things* become new.

In the cloſe of his remarks upon our miſrepreſentation of what he had ſaid upon the ſubject of *means, and the powers of the unregenerate*, the Doctor obſerves, "The Examiner is willing, upon the whole, "that what is offered on the ſubject of means, "p. 111—116. of the Examination, ſhould ſtand as it "doth." We only add, that we do not find that, in the "Examination continued," he has thrown any new light upon the ſubject, or repreſented it to any greater advantage.

Speaking, in the "Examination," of the powers of the *unregenerate*, and their capacity of being benefited *through their own endeavours* in the uſe of the means of grace, the author reprobates the diſtinction which has often been made of *moral* from *natural* powers. He obſerves that "to ſay that their incapacity" (the incapacity of the unregenerate to uſe the means of grace ſucceſsfully) "is not *natural*, but *moral*, is ſay-"ing nothing to the purpoſe, as we truſt hath been "ſhewn. If the incapacity be *real*, it is no matter "under what name it goes."* By the capacity of unregenerate men, of good effect from the means of grace, *through their own endeavours in the uſe of them, and the common ſtrivings of God's Spirit*, which he ſpeaks of, on the page juſt mentioned; we ſuppoſe he means the ſame as a *power* to uſe theſe means to good effect: and, the rather, as he had, juſt before, been ſpeaking of the "*power*" of the unregenerate "to uſe the means of grace." But if *unregenerate* ſinners poſſeſs both *natural* and *moral* capacity, or power, through the ſtrivings of God's Spirit, to uſe the means of grace to good effect, By the want of *what power*

* p. 115.

are or can they be diſtinguiſhed from the *regenerate*? And, from what principles, of which they are not now poſſeſſed, can they be *obliged* to act? After rejecting, on the laſt mentioned page, the diſtinction between *natural* and *moral* incapacity, the Examiner proceeds, "Is it *determined beforehand*, that any of the unregen-"erate ſhall not uſe the means of grace, or ſhall not "ſucceed? If it is, let any man ſhow how the goſpel "can be a privilege to them, or they liable to a great-"er damnation for abuſing it." Can the idea here expreſſed be any other, than, that if a ſucceſsful and beneficial uſe of the means of grace, amongſt men, depends on the *decree* and *will* of God, the goſpel can be no privilege? And, if not, What is the diſtinction betwixt the *powers*, or *capacities*, of the regenerate and the unregenerate?

We will not *again* preſume to ſuggeſt what the Doctor's *real ſentiments* are of the powers of the unregenerate, leſt we ſhould be guilty of miſrepreſentation. If the reader can collect them from the "Examination," with the aſſiſtance offered him in the "Examination continued," he has our full liberty, and our wiſhes for his ſucceſs. We would remark, however, the confidence with which the Examiner rejects the generally received doctrine of the *divine decrees* and *particular election*. Yea, ſo very confident is he that there is no truth in this doctrine, that he challengeth any man, on this principle, to ſhow that the goſpel is a privilege to the unregenerate. With theſe few ſtrokes of his pen has he thus annihilated this doctrine!

But, we proceed to ſome further remarks.

The Doctor tells his readers, in his Strictures,* that he is charged, by the author of the Eſſay, with "diſingenuity and unfairneſs, injuſtice and want of candour;" with being "no lover of truth, nor an "honeſt inquirer after it—with writing from envy, "to caſt an odium, and raiſe a popular cry;"—and, "that

* p. 156.

" that he is condemned as a *libertine*, heretic," &c. Alſo, that we have repreſented thoſe " who cannot " believe that God is the efficient cauſe of all the " wickedneſs of men and devils, as men of *corrupt* " *minds—deſtitute of the ſpirit of God, irritated with* " *plain evangelical truth, of a proud and haughty* " *ſpirit*," &c.* On which we only obſerve, that the Doctor had no need to apply to himſelf, or to any particular claſs of men, things which we have ſaid of *human nature in general* in its preſent fallen ſtate. Nor, had he any authority to ſay that we repreſented him as *deſigning* to propagate and eſtabliſh *ſuch ſentiments* as thoſe to which *we believe* the general ſcheme which he has advanced naturally tends, and in which it ultimately terminates. If he can find any paſſage in the Eſſay in which all, who do not believe the Deity to be the efficient cauſe of all wickedneſs, are repreſented as *men of corrupt mind—deſtitute of the Spirit of God, &c.* the author will hold himſelf under obligation to make the fulleſt retraction.

Perhaps the reader may judge that the author of the Eſſay has miſrepreſented the Examiner in what is ſaid, p. 104. of ſaid Eſſay. There we obſerved that " to " deny the preſcience of God, or adopt a ſcheme of doc- " trine which cannot be reconciled with his certain " foreknowledge of all events, carries an imputation on " God *as really* diſhonourable to him, as any of the ob- " noxious ſentiments ſuppoſed by our author to be " contained in that tract of Mr. Edwards upon which " he is animadverting. And, yet this is a difficulty " with which our author's ſcheme is *confeſſedly* em- " barraſſed." It is admitted that the paſſage will bear this conſtruction, viz. " that the Doctor's ſcheme is " *confeſſedly* embarraſſed with the difficulty of being *ir-* " *reconcilable* with the divine foreknowledge of all e- " vents;" yea, that this is the moſt natural conſtruction. In this repreſentation we frankly acknowledge that the Doctor is injured; and, condemn our own inadvertence

* p. 159, 160.

vertence in making it. The "intimation" which the Doctor has given us, in his Strictures, of the miſtake, has indeed made quite a different impreſſion on our mind, from what the miſrepreſentation itſelf appears to have made on his; as, we can receive it without thoſe ſtrong ſenſations of diſguſt and contempt with which he ſeemed poſſeſſed when he gave it.

But, that the Doctor's ſcheme is embarraſſed with difficulties ariſing from the doctrine of the foreknowledge of God, he doth not pretend to deny. Yea, he expreſſes it as his opinion that the *wiſeſt of men* conſider the divine preſcience as incapable of being reconciled with (what he ſtyles) liberty in the creature, *by any human underſtanding*.* The Doctor ought to have due credit for ſo frank a confeſſion: and, we may hence conclude that this is a difficulty which he will never ſurmount—a difficulty, under the heavy weight of which the ſcheme of doctrine he has advanced muſt lie till a greater light ſhines than is ever expected to appear in our world.

The repreſentation which the Doctor gives,§ of the hypotheſis advanced in the ſecond part of the "Eſſay," we think is unjuſt. However, the reader will judge for himſelf. What authority he had to repreſent it as our opinion that *multitudes* will periſh, while *few only* will be ſaved; and, that theſe multitudes were made ſinners in order to ſecure the future obedience and promote the happineſs of *theſe few*; we know not. When the reader turns to the ſeveral places to which the Doctor refers him for his authorities, we feel confident, he will find that no ſuch ſentiments are there expreſſed. That the awful manifeſtations of the divine diſpleaſure againſt ſin in the eternal torments of the damned, will greatly enhance the ideas of the divine glory, and in that way be a mean of eſtabliſhing the authority of the Deity, and ſecuring the future obedience, both of ſaints and angels; is what

* p. 96. § p. 164.

what we fully believe: nor, do we find that the Doctor hath offered any reaſonable objection againſt the truth and juſtneſs of the ſentiment. Whether any thing further than this is advanced by the Eſſayiſt, on this head, the candid reader is to determine for himſelf. When our author aſks, "What warrant Mr. "Weſt, or any man, hath to ſay that, had not "moral evil exiſted, the Governor of the world could "not have exhibited his hatred of ſin, his love of ho-"lineſs, his goodneſs and authority, *illuſtriouſly* in "other ways?"* He, prudently enough for himſelf, changeth the ground of the debate. Did Mr. Weſt, or any other man, ever aſſert that the Deity could not have manifeſted his perfections *illuſtriouſly*, had moral evil never taken place? The Doctor muſt be ſenſible that this is a point which was never conteſted by the author of the Eſſay. Why then doth he endeavour to repreſent him to the public as guilty of ſuch preſumption? That the taking place of ſin will be the *occaſion* of *brighter* manifeſtations of the divine glory, and *more illuſtrious* diſplays of the perfections of God, is what we fully believe: any thing further than this, we did not preſume to urge.

The Doctor further, on the laſt quoted page, inſinuates to his readers that we had repreſented all thoſe who do not agree with us in what we had ſaid on the *preferableneſs and deſirableneſs of moral evil, as he phraſeth it*, as being "*prejudiced, ſour, bitter*," &c. In reply to this charge we have only to aſk the reader to turn to the paſſage to which the Doctor refers him for its ſupport. This is all we need ſay for refuting it.

The Doctor's abhorrence of the ſentiments advanced in the "Eſſay," expreſſeth itſelf much more in ſtrong exclamation, than in ſolid and rational argument. He tells his readers, at the cloſe of his "Strictures," that the author ought to be "withſtood to the face as one who hath ſpoken wickedly for God."

We

* p. 164.

We are willing to be reſiſted, in any thing we have advanced, with the weapons of *reaſon* and *the oracles of God.* To the force of theſe, we hope, we ſhall cheerfully yield. The word of God is the ſole rule by which controverſies of this kind are ultimately to be decided. We ſhall be under obligation thankfully to acknowledge the kindneſs of any man who will point out to us in what reſpects we have perverted it. The ſection "on texts of ſcripture miſconſtrued," has not furniſhed the opportunity for our acknowledging our obligations, in this reſpect, to the author.

The Doctor thus concludes his Strictures, "When "impious tenets are publicly advanced, a vindication "of the divine character forbids us to be unconcern-"ed. If any thing we have ſaid towards the cloſe of "theſe Strictures, ſhould have the appearance of *ſe-"verity*, *that* ſeverity hath not the *perſon*, but the "*opinions* of our author for its object—opinions to "which too ſtrong a diſlike cannot be expreſſed—We "have, at the ſame time, aimed to keep in mind the "Apoſtolic advice, *in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that "oppoſe themſelves.*" The ſincerity and warmth of the Doctor's oppoſition to the ſentiments contained in the "Eſſay," there is not the leaſt room to queſtion. But, he ſeems to feel the need of ſome apology for the *appearance* it may, poſſibly, be imagined there is of *ſeverity*, towards the cloſe of his Strictures. *This*, he tells us however, hath not the *perſon*, but the *opinions* of the author of the Eſſay, for its object. This apology may readily be admitted: for, *opinions* dread no ſeverity but that of *fair*, *ſound argumentation.* Here the Doctor ſtands juſtly excuſed. As to the meaſure of his *meekneſs* in the *inſtructions* he has given us, we ſhall not take upon us to decide. Had there been a greater mixture of *argument*, *they* would not have been leſs convincing. Whether his inſtructions exceed in the *ſtrength of the reaſonings* they exhibit, or the *meekneſs* of the manner in which they are given, we profeſs ourſelves to be unable to determine. All we

can

can ſay, is, we preſume there is room left for improvement in both.

Unhappy it is, that controverſies on the moſt ſolemn and important ſubjects are too frequently managed with a ſpirit, an acrimony, which tend rather to diſgrace the authors, than to recommend the ſentiments they advance. The public will not expect controverſial writings to be free from theſe imperfections, ſo long as the hearts of men remain ſo much under the power of prejudice as to lead to ſo great a difference of ſentiment as evidently runs through the writings of the Doctor, now before us, and the preceding Eſſay. If, amidſt the *perſonalities* which may be found in each, the candid mind of the reader can find any thing that is inſtructive; while he pities the failings of the authors, he will embrace the light which he diſcovers amidſt ſo many imperfections. And, every cordial friend to the cauſe of Chriſt will be excited fervently to wiſh and pray for the commencement of that happy period, when the *watchmen ſhall ſee eye to eye*—when all the profeſſed miniſters of Chriſt ſhall have the love of the truth in their hearts; and, ſhall unite, with one heart, and with one voice, to proclaim *that glorious ſyſtem of truth which is really contained in the goſpel of Chriſt.*

AMEN.

ERRATA.

Page.	Line.	
19.	12.	for formed, read *found.*
26.	4.	for exerciſeth, read *excuſeth.*
31.	24.	for and, read *or.*
36.	18.	for thought, read *that.*
40.	3.	from bottom, for And, read *Any.*
44.	7.	for inveſted, read *invented.*
56.	19.	for denominations, read *denomination.*
74.	14.	for formed, read *found.*
89.	4.	for every, read *very.*
92.	12.	from bottom, after i. e. inſert *are.*
97.	5.	for of, read *in.*
ibid.	3.	from bottom, for meaning, read *reaſoning.*
109.	1.	for non-ſovereign, read *own* ſovereign.
111.	8.	after it, inſert *is.*
116.	13.	from bottom, for conſiſtent, read *inconſiſtent.*
132.	18.	for undeſigned, read *undeſigning.*
146.	7.	for expoſed, read *expreſſed.*
ibid.	18.	for even, read *ever.*
153.	3.	from bottom, for power, read *powers.*
162.	15.	for ſentiments, read *ſentiment.*
ibid.	19.	for ? put ;
172.	10.	from bottom, for conſideration, read *conſiderations.*
204.	17.	for is alſo, read *it* is alſo.
213.	6.	for ſcene, read *ſenſe.*

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